



NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2014



ARCTIC STARS

● High above the snow-covered peaks and slopes of northern Norway a pair of Jungle Sea Kings fly in formation on what could be the penultimate 'Clockwork' winter exercise with the Commando Helicopter Force for the legendary aircraft. See pages 21, 22 and 27 for details.

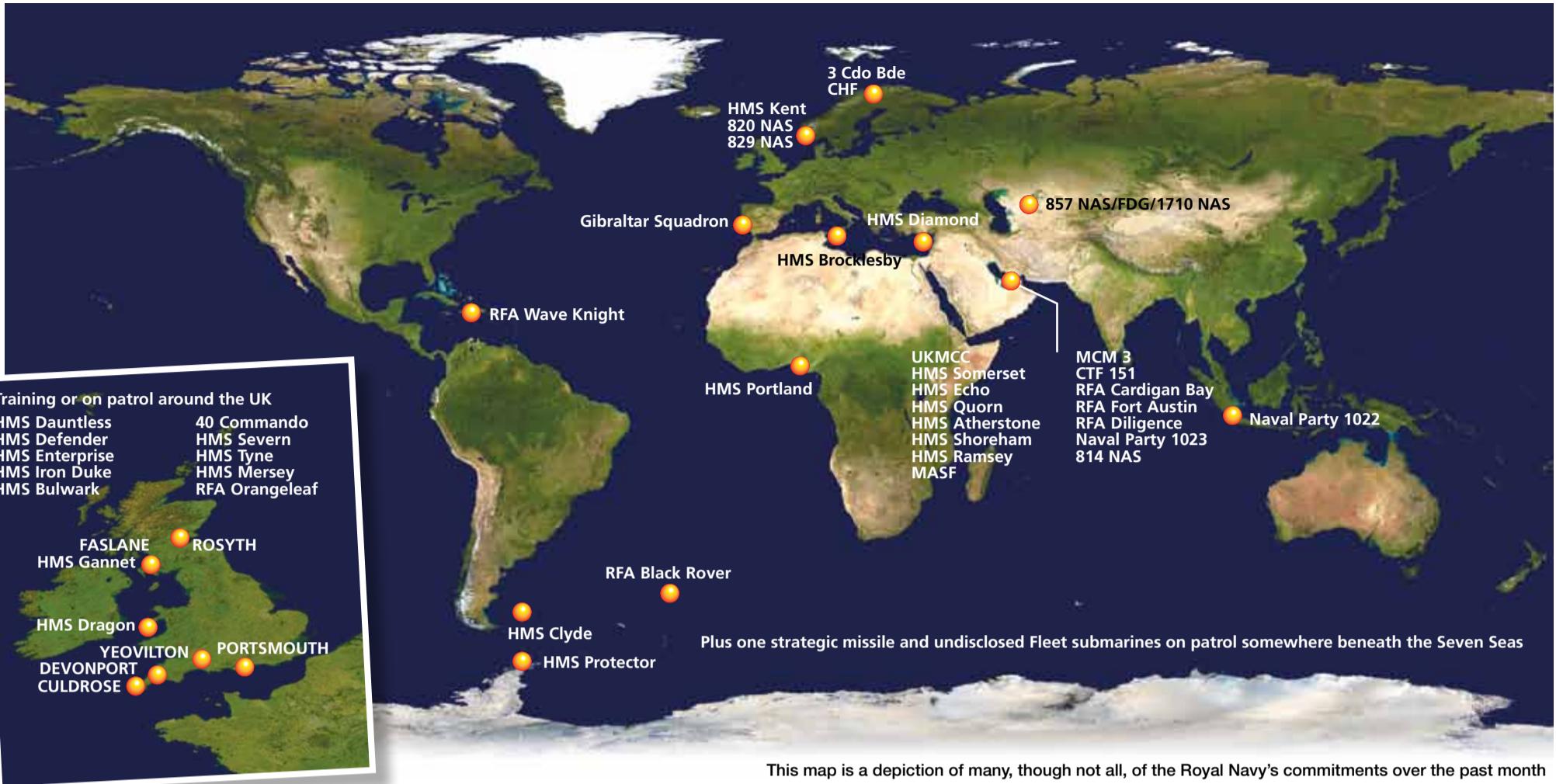
Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill, CHF



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This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month



FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

AFTER last month's surprise – and not a little surreal – flood-relief mission thrust upon the men and women of the Naval Service, the RN and RM have returned to more regular duties.

And what could be more regular than Clockwork, the annual test of the ability of air and ground crews from the **Commando Helicopter Force** to work in the Arctic? Less typically, the Sea King fliers were joined by RAF (soon-to-be FAA) Merlins (see pages 21, 22 and 27).

And just a few fjords away **Royal Marines Reserves** were testing their ability to work in the Arctic on Exercise Hairspring (see page 36).

Also in Norway, but far south of the Arctic Circle, **HMS Kent** and Merlins of **820 and 829 NAS** were testing their submarine-hunting abilities on a NATO exercise (see page 10).

And staying with snow, but at the other end of the planet, **HMS Protector**'s PTI persuaded some of his shipmates to work out on the Antarctic ice during the patrol ship's latest survey period (see page 17).

Continuing the exercise theme, the Queen's Baton and Commonwealth Games' mascot visited **HMS Clyde** in the Falklands as part of their journey around nations and territories bound to the mother country ahead of the July event (see page 6).

There was a flurry of homecomings over a period of about ten days – **Daring** from her world tour; **Westminster** from the Gulf/Indian Ocean; **Montrose** from the Gulf/Syria and **Richmond** from the Atlantic/eastern Pacific. And for each returning warship, there was a returning ship's flight from **815 NAS**, heading back to RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset (see pages 4-5 for a round-up).

In the Gulf region, **HMS Somerset**'s Royal Marines boarding team trained with their US counterparts in a mock-up merchant ship while the ship herself joined the bulk of the RN's Bahrain minehunter force and RFA ships for an Anglo-US exercise (see page 8).

HMS Defender is just about ready for her maiden deployment after five weeks of all-action training which saw the destroyer fend off swarms of attacks from the air and on the surface (see page 6).

Things have been slightly more sedate for her older sister **HMS Dauntless**, which visited Glenmallan jetty in Loch Long followed by Glasgow (see page 7).

With the winter rains having abated, the green berets of **40 Commando** could resume their normal business by storming ashore on Cornish beaches in Plymouth Sound (see page 16).

There are now fewer than 100 days to go to the launch of **HMS Queen Elizabeth** – and it's not just the jigsaw of the carrier's construction which is slotting nicely into place. A team of deck handlers has completed a stint with the USS Harry S Truman; the ship's first CO has been appointed; and a small group of officers is on exchange with the Charles de Gaulle (see pages 14-15).

Also on the new kit front, **HMS Lancaster** welcomed Merlin Mk2 for the first concerted training with a Type 23 for the new helicopter, while a Wildcat of **7000 NAS** paid its visit to a Type 45 in the form of **HMS Dragon** (see page 9).

The Cod Squad – the ships of the Fishery Protection Squadron, **HMS Mersey**, **Severn** and **Tyne** – got together for their annual combined exercise on a fine early spring day in the Solent (see opposite).

And finally, we celebrate the deeds of the **Aircrewman's Branch**, celebrating its 40th birthday this month, with a special supplement (see pages 23-26).

For selfless acts



IN FREEZING waters up to his neck, in darkness, in a vessel he did not know, with a thick layer of oil swelling around, CPO(MEM) Neil Halsey struggled to save a stricken tug from foundering.

He succeeded – sparing one of Britain's most popular stretches of coast a potential environmental disaster, and earning the Queen's Commendation for Bravery.

The 43-year-old senior rating from Gosport (*pictured right*) was one of 16 sailors and Royal Marines recognised in the latest operational honours.

CPO Halsey was serving in HMS Lancaster when she received a Mayday call from the tug Christos XXII near Torbay in January last year.

The tug had been struck by the coaster she was towing, severely damaging both vessels.

When the frigate arrived on the scene, a three-strong damage control team was sent across to the tug.

Armed only with wooden wedges to hammer into holes and two pumps, CPO Halsey demonstrated "gallant endeavour and outstanding leadership" in a dark compartment filled with diesel fumes, oily water up to his shoulders which was not only icy, but made gripping the hammers tricky.

Had the tug capsized or smashed on the rocks, more than 200 tonnes of diesel would have leaked just a few miles from Torbay's beaches.

"When I was on the boat going across to the tug I was apprehensive," the senior rate said. "I didn't know the vessel, I didn't know the layout and I didn't really know what it would be like when I got there. Thankfully it was much more stable than I had thought and so I took two guys I trusted down into the engine room with me."

"In the engine space we had to

take off our life jackets and use our torches to light the area so we could see where the water was coming in from."

"There was about an inch of oil on top of the water that was all around our shoulders and occasionally when the boat tipped you'd get a face full of it, it was pretty grim and smelled awful."

"After we hammered in the wedges and got the pumps working we got out of the space and went up top to dry off a bit and the ship sent us some chicken soup to warm up."

The chief and his team spent six hours toiling to save the tug. They succeeded.

"It was a really hard night, mentally and physically draining but knowing we had done the job we set out to do was extremely rewarding – we saved the English Riviera from a major environmental disaster."

His citation for the QCB – awarded for bravery entailing risk to life and meriting national recognition – says CPO Halsey's

efforts on the Christos XXII were an "extraordinary act of selflessness that clearly demonstrated unwavering courage."

At the opposite end of the weather spectrum, WO Christopher Mullan receives the MBE and CPO Al Kennedy the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service for their efforts to support the RN's minehunting force in the challenging conditions of the Gulf.

Of WO Mullan, his citation says: "The charismatic manner in which he continually motivated his team in the searing heat and strenuous environmental conditions of the Gulf saw him consistently stand out from all others."

As for his fellow engineer – who toiled in the same 50°C-heat – CPO Kennedy could, says his citation, "always be found at the forefront of any such work, leading by example and unwilling to yield until he has exhausted every possible avenue of repair."

Lt Karl Ashton will also receive the QCVS. As deputy logistics officer of HMS Dragon, Lt Ashton suddenly found himself thrust into the boots of his superior due to unforeseen circumstances.

"He took the bull by the horns," his citation reads "inspiring a team of 30 people to follow his example and produce an excellent performance."

The full list of Senior Service honours is:

Afghanistan

Surg Cdr Joanna Leason (OBE); Col Simon Scott (OBE); Lt Cdr Lawrence Dunne (QCVS)

Rest of the World

Cdr Irvine Lindsay (OBE); A/Cdr Camilla Meek (MBE); WO2(ETME) Christopher Mullan QGM (MBE); Maj Grant Abbott (QCVS); Rear Admiral Simon Ancona (QCVS); Lt Karl Ashton (QCVS); CPO(AET) Derek Ashurst (QCVS); Cdr Christopher Godwin (QCVS); CPO(ETME) Al Kennedy (QCVS); Lt Cdr John Ryan (QCVS); Cdr Mark Wooller (QCVS)

Miscellaneous

CPO(MEM) Neil Halsey (QCB); LS(D) John Pearson (QCB)

Iron Duke tames Bull

NEARLY 100 sailors from HMS Iron Duke joined emergency services from Jersey for combined training at the Royal Navy's ultimate 'disaster school' as the frigate's training stepped up a few notches.

The mock village of Bull Point in Devonport Naval Base recreates much of the chaos caused by storms and earthquakes – downed power lines, crashed cars, fires, collapsed buildings, and flooding.

Unusually, for Iron Duke's disaster-relief exercise – part of her two-month-long Operational Sea Training – the sailors were under the control of civilian authorities, providing manpower and specialist teams to a command team of experts from Jersey's 'Blue Light' emergency services.

The night before going ashore at Bull Point, the 180-strong team in Iron Duke readied themselves and their equipment, packing up fire-fighting equipment, blankets, first-aid gear and food ready to land and deliver lifesaving aid.

Early the next morning 'sticks' of sailors were landed by boat and helicopter to offer help to stricken villagers (played by volunteers).

"Working with the Blue Light services on board Iron Duke was a privilege, we learned a great deal from each other, and they enjoyed a high level of commitment and enthusiasm from the teams ashore," said Iron Duke's CO, Cdr Tom Tredray.

His ship was going through the final stages of OST as *Navy News* went to press, building up to a crescendo of activity, dealing with the threat of hostile aircraft, warships and small attack craft.

This training will equip Iron Duke's team to deal with most eventualities when she deploys later this year for the first time since a 16-month revamp in her home base.



Rivers of Gold

SILHOUETTED against the glistening Solent, this is the rare sight of the Royal Navy's three fishery protection ships in the same waters.

HMS Severn, Tyne and Mersey – which make up the Fishery Protection Squadron, the oldest unit in the Royal Navy – converged on Portsmouth for their annual get-together.

Normally the River class trio are spread all around the UK, carrying out their patrols – they're at sea for up to 320 days a year safeguarding fishing stocks and acting as the eyes and ears of the RN in home waters, acting as lookouts for anything untoward.

But once a year, all three ships can be found in their home base for a mix of discussions about the work of Marine Enforcement Patrols and some combined training at sea.

The sea phase opened with officer of the watch manoeuvres – a series of exercises to test the bridge teams to the limit by safely moving the ships in formation (think dressage for warships...) – and concluded with a co-ordinated entry into Portsmouth Harbour, with the ships presenting a noble sight to the public watching from Gunwharf Quays and Round Tower as they steamed past in formation towards their berths in the Naval Base.

Once alongside, Mersey hosted a cocktail party in her wardroom for the squadron's officers, headed by guest of honour Capt Phil Milburn, Captain Mine Warfare and Patrol Vessels, Diving and Fishery Protection.

That allowed officers of the 'cod squad' to catch up in an informal manner ahead of the annual fishery protection squadron conference the following day for command and boarding teams.

The command team event concluded with a visit to new HM Coastguard headquarters in Lee-on-the-Solent, where they were briefed by its chief executive, Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey – former Second Sea Lord and CO of HMS Ark Royal.

The Coastguard is one of numerous maritime agencies in the UK with which the squadron works closely, so the visit proved a valuable opportunity to establish contact in person and fully understand the capabilities of the 'new' Coastguard and its state-of-the-art operations centre.

Those not involved in the conference competed in a mini-Olympics, with HMS Severn's team eventually prevailing over Tyne and Mersey, seizing the honour of lifting the Wemyss Trophy.

HMS Mersey underwent a major overhaul in Falmouth at the end of last year and this year began with Operational Sea Training – the assessment by the Royal Navy's ultimate trainers who determine whether a ship and ship's company are ready to head off on patrol or deployment.

With just 14 days at sea from docking to the start of OST – and with a largely new ship's company, including CO Lt Cdr David Gillett – Mersey appeared to have a mountain to climb to be ready for scrutiny from the Flag Officer Sea Training staff.

The crew more than rose to the task, delivering a series of strong performances in the face of every challenge.

The FOST 'wreckers' simulated fires, floods, collisions, groundings and casualties, filling compartments with smoke; they used the latest techniques to ensure that every exercise seemed as genuine as the real thing, even using recordings of rushing water to add to the realism of flood damage.

Mersey also came under simulated attack from all manner of threats, proving her ability to deal with any incident and her readiness for operations.

The pace was equally relentless when the 'wreckers' weren't onboard as other FOST staff trained 'man overboard' drills, long-range boat operations and even flying, in collaboration with Sea Kings from HMS Gannet.

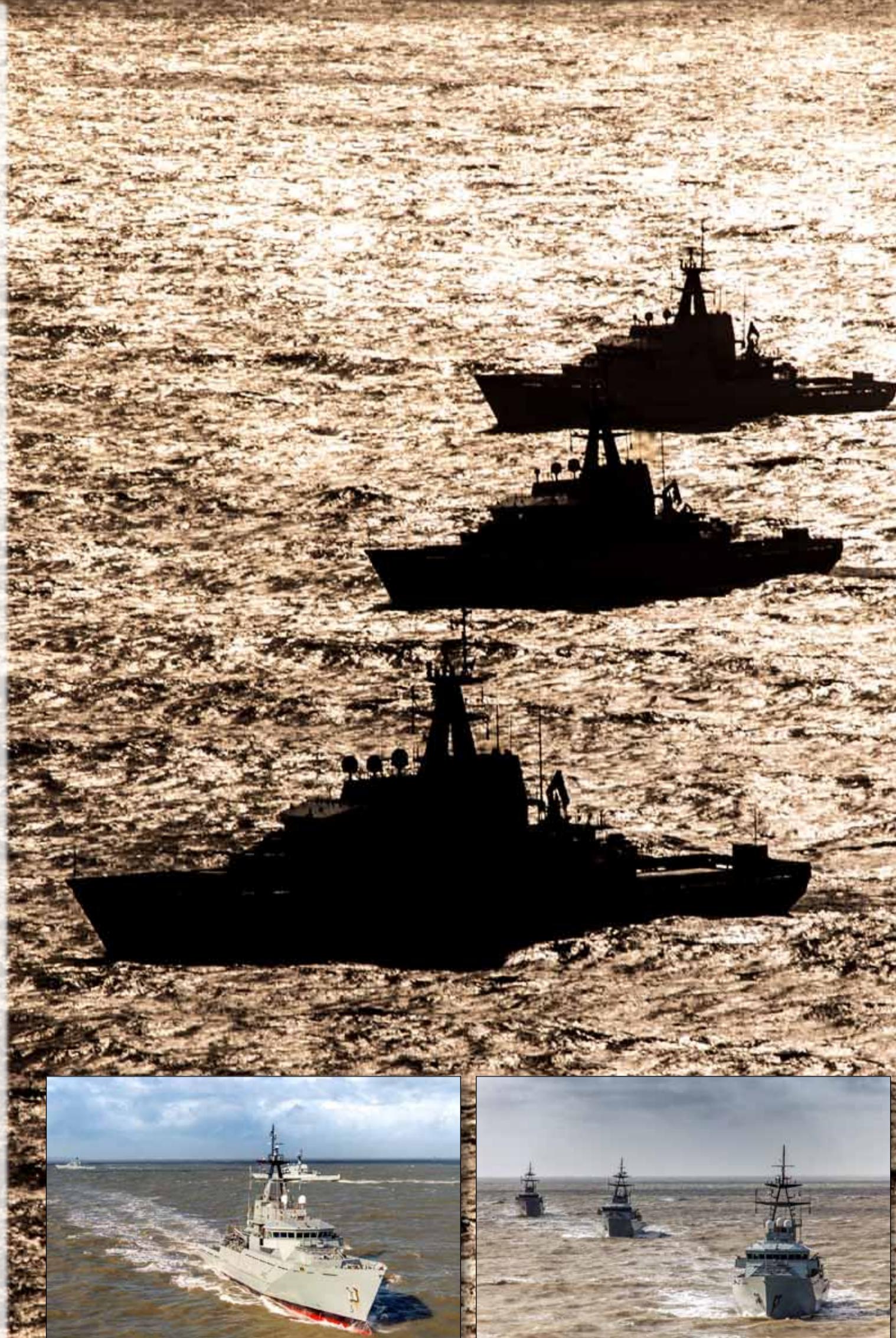
Back to the Solent exercise. Lt Cdr Gillett said: "Given the intense pace at which our ships operate, the 'squadex' is a rare chance for the vessels to operate together – and for the ship's companies to share ideas and train in company."

"It has been a great opportunity to train together and to refresh the ties between the ships of our unique squadron."

But all too soon, the exercise was over and it was time for the ships to go their separate ways, returning to the regular pattern of independent marine enforcement patrols around the UK.

Back to fish for another year...

Pictures: Lt Cdr Shaun Roster, Fleetlands



No place like home

Picture:
LA(Phot) Maxine Davies



● AB(Sea) Lynn on the fo'c'sle of HMS Daring as he throws the first line across to come alongside in Portsmouth where hundreds of relatives and friends gathered to welcome their loved ones home

HOMECOMINGS were the order of the day on several days as Royal Navy ships returned to their home ports.

HMS Daring claimed the record for the longest deployment with her nine-month world tour.

Among the hundreds of relatives and friends on the quayside in Portsmouth was Senen Mangalile, the Philippines Minister and Consul General.

The minister, who was accompanied by First Secretary and Consul Emma Sarne, presented Daring's captain Cdr Angus Essenghish with a floral garland, a heartfelt thank-you for all the ship did in November when Typhoon Haiyan struck the islands of the republic.

Mr Mangalile was fulsome in his praise for the British people's and Daring's response to the natural disaster.

"HMS Daring was the first to be there and give comfort and aid to those who were affected, especially those who were unreachable at that time," he said.

"We recognise the enormous value of what the ship's company has done."

During nine days on Operation Patwin – codename for the British relief mission – Daring and her crew surveyed 42,200 square miles (that's five times the size of Wales) encompassing more than 70 islands.

They treated 300 patients and delivered 21 tonnes of stores and 7,656 litres of fresh drinking water ashore. In all, an estimated 10,000 Filipinos in need of aid were helped – before helicopter carrier HMS Illustrious arrived on the scene.

It was by far the most rewarding – and hectic – few days of a 'world tour' (the first by any Type 45) which saw her notch up a succession of firsts, while the ship's company gathered memories of the trip of a lifetime.

Firsts? First Type 45 through the Panama Canal. First to Pearl Harbor. First to the Far East (Shanghai, Singapore, Tokyo, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia). First Type 45 to prove she can



● Lt Cdr Joe Harper



● 200 flight from HMS Daring and 234 flight from HMS Westminster return to Yeovilton



● Gavin Babb is greeted by Amie and Luke
Pictures: LA(Phot) Iggy Roberts

Double delight as aircrew return

IF YOU'RE going to make your final flight after a career spanning nearly 40 years, make it one to remember.

And Fleet Air Arm legend Lt Cdr Joe Harper did – helping to bring his Lynx safely back to Yeovilton after nine months away with HMS Daring.

And as his whirlybird touched down on the Somerset tarmac, so too the Lynx of HMS Westminster, returning from her own lengthy odyssey.

The two 815 Naval Air Squadron flights arrived back at base simultaneously.

"It's been a fantastic way to bring to

a close my 38-year career," said Flt Cdr Harper who had surpassed more than 6,500 hours in the skies – over 38 weeks or nearly nine months – by the time he brought 200 Flight, callsign Daring Darling, back home.

Of those 6,500 hours few were more dramatic than the couple of weeks the destroyer spent around the Philippines.

The Lynx helped to survey an area five times the size of Wales as it scanned islands looking for communities to help. It found them.

"Once we received our tasking the plan

was immediately drawn together and the aircraft prepared for what was going to be an extremely busy period," said Lt Cdr Harper, an observer who's now retiring from the Senior Service.

Among numerous highlights on Daring's deployment was her participation in the International Fleet Review held to celebrate the centenary of the Royal Australian Navy.

"The airborne view of Sydney Harbour and the iconic bridge was truly fantastic – but being surrounded by other aircraft and trying to remain in formation didn't

allow me to fully appreciate it," said Lt Hamish Walker, the Lynx's pilot.

There was nothing quite as exciting for Westminster's 234 Flight which focused its efforts on supporting the international fight against piracy, crime, smuggling and terrorism in the Gulf and Indian Ocean.

There were no busts, but the rapid response of the frigate's flight, which scrambled when a merchantman was worried about suspicious vessels nearby, did stave off a potential hijacking situation.

track ballistic missile targets – raising the potential of Daring and her five sisters far beyond the realm of 'mere' shields for the Fleet against air attack.

And memories? Well, apart from the plethora of visits (21 ports from the Caribbean to the Rock) and the global spotlight of the disaster relief mission, there was the small matter of joining in the biggest party in Australia since the 2000 Olympics.

The destroyer was the RN's representative at the 100th birthday of the Royal Australian

Navy (to which it gave birth back in 1913). Daring was one of around 40 warships from 17 countries which gathered for a spectacular International Fleet Review – fly pasts, sail pasts, parades and a firework display and audio-visual light show which used Sydney Harbour as its stunning *mise-en-scène*.

Anyone who's done a 'global' will tell you it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Just ask warfare specialist AB Amy Gocher, for whom this was her maiden deployment:

"This has been a million miles away from my previous job in a supermarket, but the attraction of foreign lands has kept homesickness at bay. Having crossed the equator and the international date line, the 21 ports we visited couldn't have been more varied," she said.

"Helping people in the Philippines was a highlight and a real privilege. I supported boat operations and helped load them with essential stores and personnel so that people ashore could distribute aid. The ship's

company felt immensely proud to be part of the humanitarian relief following the typhoon, it is one of the reasons that most of us join the Navy – to make a difference."

The freshly-garlanded Cdr Essenghish is certain Daring has made a difference – and on many different levels.

"My ship's company has achieved a huge amount in the nine months we've been away and they are rightly proud of their achievements.

"We have worked closely with many navies in support of

shared global challenges such as counter-piracy, preventing conflict and protecting citizens overseas, but perhaps our most significant contribution was in the delivery of relief to the people of the Philippines following the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan."

The day before Daring's homecoming the spotlight fell on HMS Westminster as she sailed into Portsmouth after six-and-a-half months in the Indian Ocean and Gulf.

Since slipping away from the jetty last August, initially to work



● Personnel from HMS Richmond show their pleasure at arriving home Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson

Trip hotted up for frigate

FROM the ice of South Georgia to the sun of Florida, the ship's company of HMS Richmond had plenty to tell their families about as the Type 23 returned to Portsmouth.

The seven-month deployment saw the frigate spend 2,881 hours at sea, covering 33,316 nautical miles, visiting seven foreign countries (Portugal, Cape Verde, South Africa, Panama, Colombia, Bahamas and the United States of America) and five British Overseas Territories (Ascension Island, St Helena, Falkland Islands, Tristan da Cunha and South Georgia).

HMS Richmond conducted a wide range of operations, from working with the Cape Verde Coast Guard to assisting members of the British Antarctic Survey to reach South Georgia for conservation work.

In the Falklands the ship visited various settlements across the Islands and trained with the British Army and Royal Air Force.

For her outstanding contribution, HMS Richmond was honoured with a Personal Commendation for Distinguished Service from the Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands, Air Commodore Russell La Forte.

It was ET(WE) Scarlett Johnson's first deployment and she said: "It was a wonderful



● AB Chris Brown is reunited with his girlfriend Picture: LA(Phot) Maxine Davies

trip that not only gave us the opportunity to develop skills through extensive training, but also to broaden our knowledge of the countries and communities with which we associated.

"Highlights have included working in a wide range of conditions where we were given the opportunity to meet and learn about people from several different cultures, the milestones that we crossed, including crossing the equator and visiting one of the most southerly populated places on the planet,

and the personal achievements which we were given the chance to strive for, such as studying for further A levels."

She added: "Overall it has been a very rewarding and unforgettable experience and I am proud to have taken part."

The ship's CO Cdr Robert Pedre said: "I am immensely proud of my ship's company's many accomplishments on this remarkable deployment and now we are home I would like to thank our families and friends for their stalwart support throughout."



● CPO Gary Maskell meets his family Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum



● Sisters Alex Bruce and Lauren Bruce Picture: Nicola Harper, BAE Systems

with the Cougar 13 task group in the Med, the Navy's 'capital ship' has called on 11 ports in eight countries, steaming (well, gas turbines) 36,500 nautical miles – more than one and a half times around the globe – in the process.

She worked with various regional and coalition navies including those from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, India, Tanzania, France and the US, as well as Italy and Greece.

During her policing patrols Westminster's teams boarded or visited 348 dhows and skiffs.

One merchant vessel reported suspicious activity on her radio and within 17 minutes the Type 23's Lynx helicopter was above the scene.

And while Westminster herself didn't snare any bad guys, she did play an indirect role in a drugs bust. Before Christmas the ship spent three days in Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania where her Royal Marines and Royal Navy boarding teams conducted training with counterparts from the Tanzania Maritime Law Enforcement Detachment. Soon

after, the detachment seized its first cargo of illicit drugs.

The rest of the ship's company found time while in the East African port to work with the charity Kidz Care which builds schools for children orphaned by HIV.

Westminster's CO Capt Hugh Beard said: "We've achieved a tremendous amount during this deployment, promoting maritime security in the Middle East, but also training with regional nations to develop their own security capabilities."

PO pays to be first

HMS MONTROSE was treated to a rapturous welcome from loved ones after seven months away, initially in the Gulf, laterally helping to remove chemical weapons from Syria.

The frigate sailed into Devonport to the usual assortment of banners, cheering, nautical tunes (courtesy of the Royal Marines Band from Lympstone) and tears of joy as families separated became families reunited.

First off the ship was not Montrose's CO Cdr James Parkin – in time-honoured tradition – but 41-year-old PO Andy Styles, who won a charity auction aboard (£420 was the victorious bid, in case you were wondering).

Waiting at the foot of the gangway, his wife Tracey and his son Marilyn.

"It feels really good to be first off the ship – an honour, and I see my wife and family first," the senior rate said.

ET James Roger, 24, from Cambridge, was greeted by his happy yet tearful girlfriend, Jenny.

"What a wonderful welcome from my grandparents, two cousins and Jenny," the junior rating said.

"It's a special homecoming for me, because from now on Plymouth will be my actual home, rather than just a base port – Jenny and I are moving in together from now on."

Montrose – who bills herself as 'the most Scottish warship in the Fleet' due to her affiliations north of the border – sailed for the Med in August as part of the Cougar 13 task force deployment.

She left the amphibious group behind for the bulk of her deployment, patrolling the Gulf, before being dispatched to the eastern Mediterranean at the beginning of 2014 to support



● Delighted to be home

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Knott



● Friends and relatives greet Montrose

Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones

the international effort to remove the chemical weapons capability from Syria, Operation RECSYR.

For two months, until handing over to destroyer HMS Diamond, Montrose joined a Danish and Norwegian warship in shepherding two merchant vessels carrying a potentially toxic cargo through the Med.

"We are extremely proud to

have been the United Kingdom's first contribution to this vital work," said Cdr Parkin.

"I am incredibly proud of my ship's company."

Montrose will undergo a maintenance period before taking up the role of Fleet Ready Escort, the RN's 'on-call' warship, ready to respond to a wide range of tasks around the UK.



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Echo tests new port

HMS Echo became the first Royal Navy ship to visit the Middle East's newest port – a port her sister ship Enterprise played a role in creating.

No ship under the White Ensign has entered Duqm in Oman, just a few years ago a fishing village, but now a major port.

The new harbour lies on Oman's east coast, roughly half way between the capital Muscat and the southern city of Salalah – both regular ports of call for Royal Navy vessels operating in the Arabian Sea.

As part of Duqm's development, Echo was asked to visit the port to review the facilities currently available and assess whether they are suitable for the Royal Navy's future use.

The Devonport-based survey ship's crew tested logistics support – drinking water and fuel – to confirm that the quality, pumping rates, and ease of supply were of the standard required.

In the mid-90s, Duqm was home to a few thousand souls. By 2020 the goal is to create a city of 100,000 inhabitants with an international port, turning it into one of the most important business hubs in the region.

To that end, a huge new dry dock – the second largest in the Middle East – has been built with breakwaters which stretch for four kilometres.

The approaches to the new port were extensively surveyed by Echo's sister Enterprise back in 2010 to ensure they could be safely navigated by vessels large or small.

"The visit to Duqm has allowed Echo to strengthen maritime relationships with Oman, test Duqm's ability to work with the Royal Navy in future and provide an alternative port of call in a key operational area," said Cdr Phillip Newell, the survey ship's CO.

As Navy News went to press, Echo was due to head to a spot in the Indian Ocean around 2,500km (1,550 miles) from Perth as part of the international search for the missing Malaysian airliner which vanished on a routine flight between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing on March 8.

Debris possibly belonging to the Boeing 777 in the middle of the Indian Ocean was spotted by satellite. The search area involved covered around 600,000 square kilometres (230,000 square miles) – slightly smaller than the North Sea.

Echo's assistance was offered by the British Government – although the precise nature of her mission was only due to be decided once she reached the area.

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The storms of war

THE orange-yellow of a Tornado's afterburner flashes as the strike bomber makes a low pass of HMS Defender – one of several waves of strike bombers to try their luck at knocking out the new destroyer.

The £1bn warship found herself under attack by air and sea during a five-week workout to prepare her for her impending maiden deployment.

The Portsmouth-based Type 45 found the North Sea skies buzzing with RAF Typhoons and Tornadoes, plus US Air Force F15 Strike Eagles to see whether she can do what she's designed to do: shield the Fleet from incoming air attack.

And for good measure, off the South Coast of England her combined Royal Navy-Royal Marines boarding team practised re-taking a hijacked tug, while the ship herself fended off hordes of fast boats attacking her simultaneously.

Defender – the fifth of six Type 45 destroyers – was put through 'top-up' training, specific to her needs for her first tour of duty east of Suez later this year.

The examination phase opened with attacks from more than 20 small craft off Plymouth (pictured right) as Defender manoeuvred violently to avoid them and brought her guns to bear on what is a very real threat around the globe.

Next up was the classic scenario all Royal Navy warships undergoing training off the South Coast endure: a Thursday war, with attacks from the air, surface and submarines – and Defender suffering considerable simulated battle damage to stretch the ship and her sailors to the limit.

"The training we receive from FOST is world-class and prepares us for any eventuality, wherever we may be tasked around the world," said Lt Cdr Steve Robinson, Defender's weapon engineer officer.

"My department of 50 highly-skilled men and women have excelled, proving the worth of front-line engineers to the Royal Navy in maintaining a highly-technological ship."

Defender welcomed a detachment of Royal Marines for the first time to tackle the global threat of piracy.

The combination of green berets and Type 45 destroyer was more than a match for the simulated pirates smuggling drugs and weapons; they were quickly intercepted, searched and apprehended.

The final phase saw the destroyer shift to the North Sea to practise the ship's primary



function: area air defence.

From the waters off East Anglia, Defender's radars can track pretty much every aircraft bound for the major airports of England, Wales and Scotland, plus the Netherlands, Belgium, north-west Germany and northern France.

The destroyer was joined by a Boy's Own selection of jets – American F15s, RAF Tornadoes and RAF Typhoons.

The ship not only proved her ability to shoot down any threats in the air with the deadly combination of her 1045 radar and Sea Viper missiles, but also her ability to control friendly aircraft to intercept hostile fighters.

"This was a dream come true controlling some of my favourite aircraft that I made models of as a child, and an amazing way to cap off our training period," said the ship's Fighter Controller Sub Lt Kev 'The Red Baron' Diaper.

Just 24 hours after all this action ended and Defender's men and women were on the streets of their adopted city of Exeter for the first time.

After Lord Mayor Cllr Rachel Lyons presented the destroyer's CO, Cdr Phil Nash, with the



freedom scroll, 200 sailors led by a Colours Party and Guard with bayonets fixed, set out through the streets of Exeter on a fine spring morning, accompanied by music from the Band of HM Royal Marines Lympstone.

The freedom parade – the first by sailors since the passing five years ago of destroyer HMS Exeter, which the new Type 45 replaces – was the highlight of a weekend of events in the city, which began with ten members of the ship's crew dining as guests of the Lord Mayor in the Guildhall.

For the rest of the ship's company there was a rather more informal reception the following day after their marching: a panty

and a pint courtesy of the White Ensign Club.

"HMS Defender is humbled to have had the Freedom of the City of Exeter conferred and to march for the first time," said Cdr Nash.

"It was with particular pride that the ship's company paraded through the streets of Exeter on this occasion, marking this historic milestone in the early history of our exceptional ship.

"A freedom parade is a very special moment in any ship's affiliation and we couldn't be more proud to exercise this honour in our adopted city, with which we already have a close bond."

£120m extra for reactor refuelling

BRITAIN'S oldest ballistic missile submarine will need an additional nuclear reactor refuel at a cost of £120m.

The work on HMS Vanguard – to be carried out during her next deep maintenance period, beginning in 2015 – has been ordered after low levels of radioactivity were detected in a prototype core at the RN's reactor test establishment at Dounreay.

The prototype at the remote site on Scotland's north coast is used to assess how the reactor cores on the Silent Service's boats will perform over time.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said the additional work on Vanguard was a "precautionary" step: "There is no evidence at this stage that the problem detected with the test reactor is likely to present in the operational reactors."

The refuelling – which will be part of a three-and-a-half-year revamp for the 22-year-old boat – will help sustain Vanguard until the Successor class of replacement 'bombers' enter service around 2028.

To build the Successors, the government and BAE are investing more than £300m over the next eight years in the submarine construction facilities at Barrow.

The work to revamp the site will require around 850 workers, while building the remaining boats in the Astute-class (five are in various stages of construction at the BAE works, with two vessels already delivered to the Royal Navy) as well as the Successors will support around 6,000 jobs on the site.

Belated NATO work begins

NEARLY a month later than planned – thanks to the battering Western Europe suffered at the hands of a constant wave of Atlantic storms – minehunter HMS Brocklesby has belatedly taken her place with a NATO force.

After a few quick fuelling stops in Gibraltar, Sicily and Bari, Brocklesby met up with the rest of NATO's Mediterranean minewarfare force – comprising German ships Weilheim and Rhein and Italian minehunter Chioggia – in the central Adriatic.

On joining the group a full programme of exercises was planned, giving all the ships opportunity to practise their skills in ship handling, replenishing while under way, and communicating via flags and Morse code by lamps.

The changeable Mediterranean weather meant that following the exercises the force once again had to seek shelter in the vicinity of the Greek islands of Corfu and Kefalonia.

However this gave the teams from the various ships the opportunity to cross-deck and meet each other while the ships were anchored.

"It's really great how the military mindset spans different cultures and language barriers," said Brocklesby's operations officer Lt Tim Allen.

"Sailors, regardless of nationality, have the same hard work ethos and wicked sense of humour."

His Portsmouth-based minehunter will remain with the NATO group until the middle of this month.

Thistle be good fun



LT CDR Sarah Oakley wrests the captain's chair back from Clyde, official mascot of the Commonwealth Games, after he (briefly) took over his namesake warship in the Falklands.

The green and purple thistle joined the patrol ship as the baton for this summer's sporting spectacular reached British Forces in the distant islands.

The baton arrived on the South Atlantic airbridge (aka airliner from Ascension Island...) where it was met by local dignitaries, including the commander of all the UK military units south of the Equator, Air Cdre Russell La Forte, as well as schoolchildren.

"This event really reminded everyone who came to see the baton that even though we are such a way from home, we're not forgotten and actually, the distance isn't as great as we make ourselves believe. A really big feel-good day," said Flt Lt Thomas Beddow.

The baton – made of titanium and elm wood and containing a personal message from the Queen which will be read at the opening ceremony in Glasgow on July 23 – is visiting 70 nations and territories on its 288-day, 190,000km (118,000-mile) global odyssey.

From Mount Pleasant, it was flown by helicopter to HMS Clyde, the islands' permanent Royal Navy presence.

As at the air base, there was a large crowd of Falklanders gathered to see the baton – and while it left the ship to continue its travels (next stop, Guyana in northern South America), not so its accompanying thistle mascot; he was presented to the ship as a token of appreciation.

"It was a great privilege to be able to host the baton – and to assist with delivering it to Stanley," said Lt Cdr Oakley.

"I have been watching the progress of the baton through Africa and am delighted that HMS Clyde was able to participate in such an exciting event."

Calm reflection

REFLECTED in the clear, calm waters of Loch Long as the sun goes down on a flawless early spring day, HMS Dauntless visits Glenmallan ammunition jetty.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer spent a good week around the Firth of Clyde – first on the loch to take ammo on board, then in the city of her birth for a visit to Glasgow.

The Glenmallan jetty – next to the Garelochhead-Arrochar road – has been used by Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships for nearly two decades, loading and unloading bombs, missiles, shells and other ammunition (they're stored in underground bunkers three miles away at the MOD's Glen Douglas armaments depot).

Whilst alongside in Loch Long, many of Dauntless' sailors seized the opportunity for some adventurous training: skiing, cycling and white-water rafting in some great scenery in Scotland.

Her business at Glenmallan complete, Dauntless sailed 34 miles down Loch Long and up the Clyde to Glasgow's King George V Dock – roughly half-way between Govan and Scotstoun, where the destroyer was built and fitted out respectively.

The ship spent four days in the city and although she wasn't open to the public, a hectic programme of private visits was lined up: students from several schools, and youngsters from a good half dozen Sea Cadet and

Combined Cadet Force units, plus members of the Glaswegian branch of the Association of Wrens.

"The Type 45s have a strong natural bond with the Clyde – it is where all six sister ships were built," said Cdr Adrian Fryer, Dauntless' CO.

"Although we are unable to open to the public on this occasion, we strove to accommodate as many groups as we could and hope the people who did make the journey to visit us left having had an interesting time on board our exceptional ship."

In addition, civic dignitaries and other guests were invited aboard for a demonstration of what Dauntless is capable.

Which, given what the Type 45 has been doing all 2014 to date, should have been very switched on.

The first two months of the year have been taken up with Operational Sea Training – the demanding assessment which ensures all Royal Navy vessels are fit to deploy around the globe.

Having come through the rigours of OST off Plymouth, the training and exercises around the UK continue for Dauntless, beginning with the latest Joint Warrior war games.

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Quorn tackle Gulf graves

GETTING stuck in under the scorching Gulf sun, sailors from a Royal Navy warship restore the graves of British Servicemen laid to rest in Bahrain more than 40 years ago.

A team from HMS Quorn took time out of the minehunter's busy maintenance schedule to tackle some overgrown and weather-worn graves at the New Christian Cemetery.

Twenty-three British Servicemen who were based in the kingdom in the 1960s and early '70s are laid to rest in the graveyard, which lies about five miles from Quorn's base at Mina Salman.

Over three days, the minehunter's crew set to work under the 35°C 'winter' sun, removing all the plant growth and rubble from the surrounding area.

"It's not often we get a chance to make a difference like this while overseas. I was very proud to be able to help," said AB Danny 'Dusty' Millar, who spent two days toiling in the graveyard.

Once the area was tidied and cleared, work began on restoring the wall enclosing the graves. The team stripped back all of the existing paint, which had been badly weathered, and then applied fresh coats to restore the wall to its original condition.

The New Christian Cemetery is part of St Christopher's Cathedral. Its Dean, the Very Reverend Christopher Butt, said Quorn's team had done "a great job".

He continued: "The before and after photos tell the story and I am hugely grateful to the sailors and officers who have given their time and energy for this task."

Quorn's CO Lt Cdr Stuart Yates said his sailors were delighted to help out.

"We are extremely pleased to contribute to the local community by restoring the cemetery to a condition fitting the sacrifice given by the men buried there," he added.

"We are proud of our links with Bahrain and when I asked for volunteers from the ship's company I was overwhelmed with the response."

The sailors carried out the work while Quorn – one of four RN minehunters based in Bahrain – was undergoing an overhaul.

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Picture: LA(Phot) Benny Shread



MeaninMina

PISTOL at the ready and camera on his helmet to record events, Royal Marine Commandos prepare to board a merchant ship in Bahrain port and oust pirates from the hijacked vessel.

The green beret boarding team from HMS Somerset and their US Marine Corps counterparts of the Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team stalked their way through the three decks of the superstructure to complete their mission.

If you're wondering why you haven't heard about it in the news, it was a training scenario played out by the two Corps in a specialist facility in the Gulf kingdom.

The 'ship in a box' complex in Mina Salman Naval Base is built from shipping containers stacked in three storeys with the inside mirroring a real merchant ship – complete with a bridge, an engine room and fittings to mimic what would be found on board.

The Royal Marines 'green' team from 43 Cdo Fleet Protection Group RM do the initial boarding, securing a vessel and its crew; the Royal Navy 'blue' team follows to conduct a thorough search.

'Ship in a box', which is run by the US Coast Guard who also patrol these waters, provides a unique workout for boarding teams – not just British and American, but also Gulf and visiting Coalition nations – to hone their skills in an authentic environment, even down to the use of simulated ammunition (like the real thing minus the blood).

"We are very lucky to have this so close to our

ship. The facility, and the opportunity to work with other forces, provides a unique opportunity we would not otherwise have," said Capt Steve Taylor RM of Somerset's green team.

"This type of training provides an opportunity to learn how we operate differently and hands on practice for our 'core perishable skills' – skills that if we don't use we will lose."

The combination of the realistic facility and the chance to train side-by-side with fellow marines was enjoyed by members of both Corps.

"We are lucky to be able to train alongside other elite units – especially in the area of boarding and search and seizure – where they have experience and expertise we can learn from," said US Marine L/Cpl Auster Crowder.

Royal Marine Mne Rory East added: "Even the banter is part and parcel of learning to work better together."

Capt Timothy Stefan USMC said both teams of marines would take a lot away from their combined training. "This allows us to review tactics, exchange ideas, to fill our toolbox with more tools when we are on operations. It challenges our way of thinking, to ask ourselves, 'Could we do this better?'"

His British counterpart Capt Taylor added: "This allows us to explore the in-depth knowledge of colleagues who have significant experiences and respond to similar incidents. This can only help us perform better in future."

The Royal Navy is building its own 'ship in a box' complex; the £1m facility at HMS Raleigh in Torpoint is due to open later this spring.

Portland's royal seal

IT IS not every day that a Royal Navy officer gets the chance to call in on a king.

This is the Oba – king – of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Akiolu, receiving the gift of a ship's badge from the Commanding Officer of HMS Portland, Cdr Sarah West, as the frigate spent three days in the Nigerian port on the latest stage of her West African adventure.

Calling on the king – a title going back to the beginning of the 17th Century, which today is a ceremonial position – was one of a myriad of duties for Cdr West during a hectic few days for her and her ship's company in Lagos.

Sailors laid on a capability demonstration showing local VIPs what a Type 23 frigate can do and hosted an international maritime security forum and a series of topical lectures from influential speakers.

While half the 200-strong ship's company ran the events for military forces, government representatives, commercial bodies and NGOs alike, the other half joined the Nigerian Navy for some combined training with a force which describes itself as an offshoot of the Royal Navy.

Portland provided a highly-skilled team of instructors who spent two days teaching Nigerian sailors of all levels of experience – from new naval cadets to experienced sailors of the Nigerian Special Boat Service.

Portland's experienced hands shared techniques which the Royal Navy uses to fight fires,



stop floods, and board and search suspect vessels.

And the frigate's clubz, LPT Matthew O'Brian, introduced the Nigerians to 'phys' RN style, helping the locals to run a fitness class, as well as taking aboard some of the native sailors' ideas for remaining 'fit to fight and fit for life'.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to train with the physical training instructors from the Nigerian Navy and was impressed with the fitness level of the class that I instructed – especially in temperatures which reached 28°C," said Matthew.

Rear Admiral S I Alade, Flag Officer commanding the Nigerian Western Naval Command, was grateful for the short, but extremely productive

visit from the British warship.

"We have enjoyed working with our Royal Navy partners – Nigeria's Navy is an off-shoot of the Royal Navy and we continue to work closely," he said.

Portland is in the early stages of her North/South Atlantic deployment which will keep her away from Devon until the summer.

The focus presently is on working with the navies and maritime agencies in countries in West Africa and flying the flag for the UK – she's already trained alongside the Coast Guard of Cape Verde, allies in the fight against the illegal drugs trade, and visited Freetown in Sierra Leone.

Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, HMS Portland



Gucci helo #1



Gucci helo #2

2 x new helicopter, 2 x milestone

ABOUT to set down on the deck of HMS Lancaster, this is the very first time the Fleet Air Arm's new submarine hunter has joined the frigates on which it will ride into battle...

...and on the right, coming in to land on the rather more expansive flight deck of HMS Dragon is the Fleet Air Arm's other next-generation helicopter entering service, Wildcat, touching down for the very first time on a Type 45 destroyer.

Trials of Merlin Mk2 and the successor to the Lynx have continued apace with both passing two small, but important, milestones.

As the Merlin 1 has been for the first decade or so of its career, so the Mk2 will be a mainstay of Type 23 frigate operations.

829 Naval Air Squadron is the third of the RN's four Merlin squadrons to undergo the conversion to the souped-up

aircraft and brought one of the improved models aboard the Red Rose frigate in the Channel.

Accidents, such as a crash on deck, were practised to run out the ship's emergency response organisation, while the Merlin conducted numerous sorties and tried out secondary duties, such as winching a casualty from the frigate's fo'c'sle.

"I am very proud to be the first to operate a Merlin Mk2 from a Type 23 frigate," said Lt Cdr Simon 'Steve' Stevenson, the Flight Commander.

"It is an exciting time and I am looking forward to the continued integration of this aircraft with the ship, testing its capabilities to the max."

"This short embarkation represents another major step forward of the integration of a vastly capable and complex aircraft into the Royal Navy, ensuring we remain at the forefront of

anti-surface and sub-surface warfare."

For the commanding officer of the Portsmouth-based warship – which was instrumental in trials helping the original Merlin into service nearly 15 years ago – the arrival of its second-generation model is a real bonus.

"The new Merlin is a huge step forward in capability for the Royal Navy and Lancaster is very privileged to be part of these trials," said Cdr Peter Laughton.

"Over the coming weeks we will be working very closely with the new Merlin and her crew to ensure its successful introduction into front-line service."

Meanwhile in the Irish Sea...

Pilot Lt Dave Neyland and Flight Observer Lt Sammy Haynes brought Wildcat ZZ377 safely on to Dragon as she ploughed her way home following a visit to Liverpool.

Wildcat is undergoing extensive

trials with 700W Naval Air Squadron, formed especially to help introduce the helicopter into service.

As part of those trials, the aircraft has been working at the MOD's aerial range in Cardigan Bay.

As expected, the inaugural arrival of Wildcat on Dragon went seamlessly and the whole ship's company got the chance to take a look and admire the latest addition to the Fleet Air Arm.

"Today is a small but exciting step in the progression of this new capability and I am delighted that HMS Dragon was able to help," said Capt Iain Lower, the Type 45's Commanding Officer.

"I look forward to seeing what the aircraft can do when we put it through its paces later this month."

After the brief visit off the Welsh coast, Wildcat was due to be a more permanent presence aboard Dragon at the end of March; for the first time the helicopter

was embarking on the ship as a 'flight' for the latest Joint Warrior exercise.

"This year will be one of many firsts for the Wildcat crews as we work with our industry partners to get the aircraft to sea as soon as we can," said 700W's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Simon Collins, who flew aboard D35 with his squadron colleagues.

"Deck landings onboard a Type 45 at sea are a real milestone and it was a pleasure to join the Dragon team to show them what Wildcat can do."

The Wildcat roll-out programme is continuing at full pace; plans are in motion for the current flight to be the first to complete Operational Sea Training with a frigate in the autumn.

As for Dragon, following her lengthy and demanding maiden deployment last year to the Med and Middle East, she's due to deploy for her second operational tour in October.

Boom and (TANK) BUST



Pitch glitch fixed

LIBYAN sailors can now enjoy a kick-about in their spare time thanks to the efforts of British sailors, soldiers and marines.

The UK's Defence Advisory Training Team – which is helping the Libyans to rebuild their armed forces after the 2011 civil war – took a break from their day-to-day training and mentoring to repair the five-a-side pitch at Tripoli Naval Dockyard.

Football is hugely popular in the country – the national side recently won the African Nations' Championship – but many of the sporting facilities at military establishments had fallen into disrepair, including the pitch at the naval base in the capital.

With Brig Hugh Blackman, the commander of the joint team in Libya, very much aware that the role of his men and women is as much about hearts and minds and gaining trust as it is about providing advice, a tri-Service team was formed to make the pitch playable.

After just a little investment and some personal effort, the team managed to turn the area from a disused eyesore into a functioning pitch which has already been the site of a number of games between DATT and Libyan personnel.

"The repairing of a football pitch will not overcome the multiple challenges facing the Libyan Navy, but it will enable representatives from both the UK and Libya to form closer bonds through a shared passion for the game," said Col Mansour, head of Libyan Navy training.

As well as helping to restore the five-a-side pitch, the Royal Navy has been instrumental in helping to bring back rugby union (the sport was banned under the Gaddafi regime for being 'too violent').

Away from the sporting arena, the UK's small Naval Advisory and Training Team is helping to provide the material and infrastructure so its Libyan colleagues can train sailors across the gamut of naval trades – from marine engineering to navigation.

With the emphasis on 'train the trainer', the British sailors and Royal Marines provide guidance, training and curriculum to help the Libyan Navy to modernise its own training programmes and facilities.

"Marrying Libyan ambition and Royal Navy experience, I feel confident we will continue to improve the security within Libyan territorial waters," said Cdr Richard Pethybridge, the RN's senior maritime advisor in Tripoli.

Col Mansour added: "The partnership formed between the Libyan Navy and the Royal Navy is starting to make real progress."

"We hope that this will set the foundations for enduring cooperation between both navies."

THAT'S going to ruin your day if you're in a tank...

...and if you're not, it's going to really ruin it...unless you're pulling the trigger.

A Javelin armour-piercing missile leaves its launcher as Royal Marines reach the high point of six weeks of training with some of the punchiest weaponry in the Corps.

The commandos' 'tankies' hit the ranges at Lulworth – 11 square miles of Dorset countryside where you can let rip (technical term) with the fury of fire and steel – for the live-firing (ie exciting bit) of their heavy weapons training, which sees them learn how to use the .5 ("50 cal") heavy machine-gun, 40mm grenade launcher (which fires grenades machine-gun-fashion – 350 a minute – at targets over a mile away).

Learning to fire the latter two weapons takes two and a half weeks in the classroom, followed by a few days down on the range (for day and

night shoots).

The second half of the course is devoted to the Javelin, introduced into service nearly a decade ago.

It 'plops' (another technical term) out of the launcher – a 'soft launch', so you can fire Javelin inside a building rather than the air pressure blowing your ears out – before the rocket engine kicks into life and powers the missile at up to 400mph.

It barely has time to reach that speed, for its range is 2,500 metres – 1½ miles – but time enough for it to climb up to 150 metres (nearly 500ft) before plunging on to its target, at which point its 8kg warhead is enough to punch through any known tank armour.

Before firing it, there's considerable work in the classroom as students learn how to recognise and distinguish between scores of different armoured fighting vehicles from vast distances, and they have to complete a minimum of 40 attacks

on the simulator before they attempt a Gunnery Skills Test – live firing.

At the end of most anti-tank courses the top student is allowed to fire a live missile. At the end of this one, two Javelins were fired at the hull of a tank at Lulworth from a range of 1,300 metres.

Kaboom.

"It was unreal firing the Javelin missile," says 24-year-old Mne Liam Bounall from West London. "To be fair I didn't expect to come in the top two – it was a very tight course. Everyone was at the same level. But I was lucky enough to get there. And I hit the target more importantly!"

Mne Rob O'Connor, 23, from Birmingham, added: "Firing the Javelin was the best thing on the course. I've had to wait two and a half years to get on it but it's been a very good course to go on."

Anti-tank – known throughout the Corps simply as tanky – is one of three heavy weapons specialisations in the

Corps (the other two are mortars and air defence), with courses run by CTCRM at Lympstone.

"We are the anti-armour defence for a commando unit," said C/Sgt Jim Melhuish, chief instructor of the anti-tank course.

"Javelin has really come into its own in Afghanistan. In the Forward Operating Bases these would be used in the sangers and they would be manned 24/7."

"It is the best night optic system we have had to date for sentries to be able to positively identify targets and to be able to recognise what they are carrying."

"If you are on a task like an advance to contact or a clearance of a designated area then these would be the screening force for the fighting guys on the ground going forwards. These guys would provide the information of what's ahead of them as they move forward."

Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, CTCRM

Mountainous seas...



...THOUGH it was the mountainous seas pictured right that tested the participants of Exercise Dynamic Mongoose rather than the steeping fjords as depicted above.

'DMON 14' was the annual opportunity for eight NATO allies to test their anti-submarine skills in European waters, an exercise which alternates between Sicily (Proud Manta) and Norway.

On this occasion the cat-and-mouse tactics between ships and submarines were played out in the Norwegian Sea.

The Royal Navy representatives in the 11-day hunt were three Merlin helicopters – one upgraded Mk2 which has just entered service with 820 Naval Air Squadron and two first-generation aircraft from 829 NAS – and frigate HMS Kent.

It's the first time the upgraded Merlin – the Mk2 – has left UK shores for training.

The helicopter has spent the past 12 months undergoing thorough trials and evaluation at the Cornish air station, and it clocked up an invaluable 60



● HMS Kent ships it green off the coast of Norway

hours worth of flying during DMON 14 – during which it became the first Mk2 to successfully track a submarine using both active dipping sonar and active sonobuoys.

One Merlin Mk1 was based on the frigate while the other aircraft

operated from the Norwegian Air Force base at Sola, near Stavanger, alongside a French Atlantique and German P-3C maritime patrol aircraft.

From there the ten ships and various aircraft ranged up to 100 miles off the coast of Norway

in a series of tests – sometimes they hunted the five submarines, provided by the navies of Portugal, Norway and France, at other times they were hunted by the conventionally-powered boats.

Culdrose's Merlins – the world's leading sub-hunting helicopter – typically accept the invitation to participate, sometimes with a British warship in tow, sometimes without.

DMON 14 involved around 2,000 personnel 'on site' – 1,700 in surface ships, 200 in submarines and 100 with the aircraft – and a further 300 or so at Northwood in the UK and Sola air base.

Augmentees in the command centres from the United States and Canada, and a Polish frigate at sea, completed the roster of eight participating nations, providing varied threats and evasion techniques for the submarine-hunting specialists.

"We've been relishing the opportunity to take part in a testing anti-submarine exercise and show our NATO colleagues just what the Fleet Air Arm and the Merlin

is capable of doing," said Cdr Ben Franklin, Merlin Force Commander.

"Dynamic Mongoose provided a fantastic opportunity for our Merlin squadrons to hone their skills while working closely with other NATO, air, surface and sub-surface forces.

"It's also been a key element of the ongoing need to ensure that the Fleet Air Arm remains at high readiness for operations.

"It provided our Merlin crews with an excellent opportunity to practise their anti-submarine warfare skills against a variety of 'adversaries' not normally encountered in British waters."

The exercise was one of several important tests for the new-look helicopters, which are more than half-way through a £750m overhaul.

This month they are due to head to Scotland to take part in the first of this year's two Joint Warrior exercises (HMS Kent will also take part), followed by the biggest anti-submarine warfare

exercise run by the Royal Navy in years, with nine first and second-generation Merlins joining HMS Illustrious in the Atlantic.

But it was not exclusively a gathering for the submarine-hunting fraternity.

Surface ships also had the opportunity to test their warfighting skills in a number of scenarios which increased in difficulty as the exercise unfolded.

And rough weather provided an additional complication as ships replenished at sea, tracked and engaged each other, plotted aircraft and formed task groups to escort and protect high-value units, proving themselves as individual units as well as the ability to seamlessly integrate into a coherent fighting force.

During this exercise, Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 has grown from two to a task group of ten vessels" said Cdre Nils Andreas Stensønes, who commanded the surface group.

"This demonstrates how the group can seamlessly integrate vessels from Allied nations and expand in accordance with the demands of the current situation.

"The contributions from all the nations have been outstanding."



● HMS Kent alongside the Skoltegrunnskaien ferry and cruise ship terminal in Bergen

- (Above) POAET Stuart 'Dixie' Dean working atop the Merlin on board HMS Kent in heavy snow
- (Below right) Norwegian submarine HNoMS Utsira and compatriot frigate HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl in the fjords near Bergen

Picture: NATO

The Mongoose roster

SUBMARINES from Norway, Portugal and France; HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl (Norway), Fridtjof Nansen-class frigate;

FGS Magdeburg (Germany), Braunschweig-class or K130 corvette;

HMS Kent (UK), Duke-class or Type 23 frigate;

FS Primauguet (France), F70-class frigate;

FGS Hamburg (Germany), Sachsen-class or F124 frigate;

FGS Augsburg (Germany), Bremen-class or F122 frigate;

FGS Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany), Brandenburg-class or F123 frigate;

ORP Kosciuszko (Poland), Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate;

FGS Oldenburg (Germany), Braunschweig-class or K130 corvette;

FGS Frankfurt am Main (Germany), Berlin-class or Type 702 auxiliary replenishment ship;

French Atlantique 2 maritime patrol aircraft, German P-3C maritime patrol aircraft and British Merlin helicopters.



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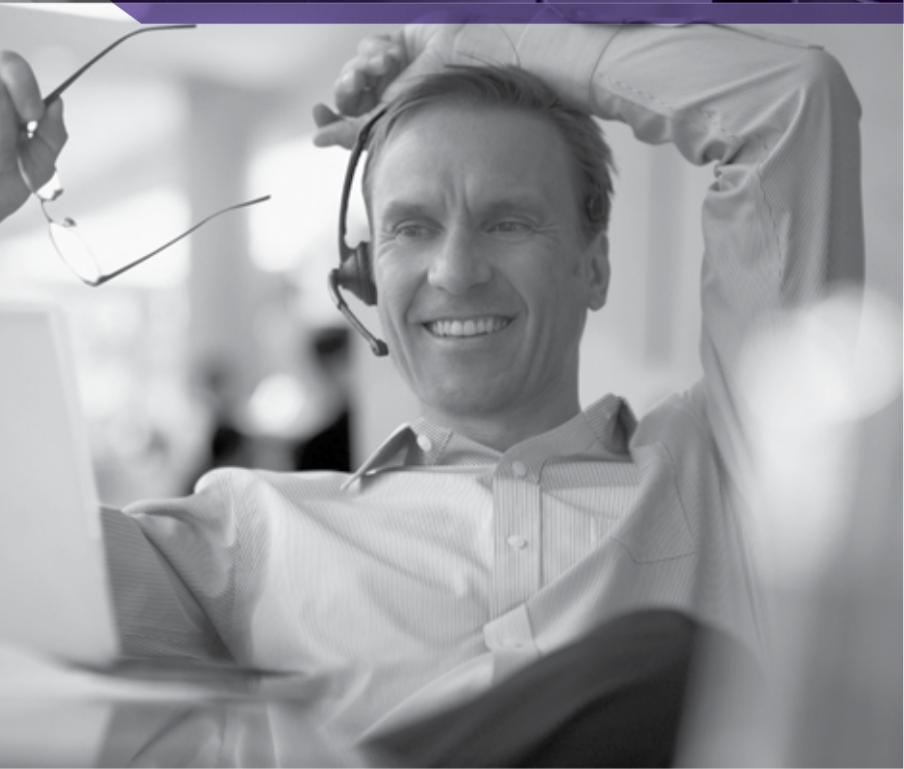


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Black day for the Black Duke

IN THIS sense classic ship really means historic, rather than outstanding.

For the only thing truly classic about HMS Monmouth was that her loss was a classic case of the wrong ship in the wrong place at the wrong time.

She was also a classic case of a ship built on the cheap and perhaps also a classic case of the amateurism with which the Royal Navy opened some of its proceedings in the first weeks of the Great War.

Monmouth was the first of ten armoured cruisers laid down in the final months of the Victorian and first days of the Edwardian era. Their task: to safeguard British merchant shipping in the far-flung corners of the globe.

The Counties (also known as the Monmouth-class) were cheap: on average around three-quarters of the price of their predecessors.

Those predecessors were considerably more heavily armed – as First Sea Lord Jackie Fisher waspishly observed: “Sir William White designed the County class but forgot the guns.”

Not entirely. But not only were the 14 6in guns Sir William did provide Monmouth and her sisters with less potent than the 9.2in guns of the earlier Drake class, but many of those 6in guns were poorly situated – so close to the waterline that they were little, if any, use in heavy seas.

Even in their heyday, no-one expected any of the Counties to face up to anything more powerful than a light cruiser.

But the exigencies of war in 1914 pressed obsolescent and unfit ships into service to meet the demands of the burgeoning global conflagration.

The Monmouth – now long since superseded by a succession of more modern classes of cruisers, British or otherwise – had been languishing in the Reserve Fleet after serving on the China Station for seven years.



War saved her. On the very day Britain declared war against Germany, Monmouth was reactivated, hurriedly crewed and dispatched to join the 4th Cruiser Squadron in the West Indies under Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock.

Her appearance shocked Lloyd Hirst, an officer on the newer light cruiser HMS Glasgow.

“She had been practically condemned as unfit for further service, but was hauled off the dockyard wall, commissioned with a scratch crew of coastguardsmen and boys,” he recorded in his diary.

“She is only half equipped and is not in a condition to come 6,000 miles from any dockyard as she is only kept going by super-human efforts.”

As for those aboard the Monmouth, patrolling between Cape Rogue (today Ponta de Calcanhar) and Montevideo – a 5,000-mile round trip – looking for rogue German ships was “pretty average hell,” Basil St Merryn Cardew, a 19-year-old junior officer who’d joined the Navy in the summer of 1913, wrote to a friend.

He continued: “The worst of this game is this: we darken ship

every night, close all scuttles and hatches and of course black out all fresh air.

“It gets dark here at 6pm so for 12 hours at least we are in the most awful fug. Being an old ship, there are no ventilators or fans.”

Monmouth’s mission – or ‘game’, as St Merryn Cardew put it – was “to protect the trade routes and hunt us three German cruisers that are out here somewhere – but they make themselves pretty scarce I can tell you.”

The teenager surmised that the hunt for the Germans – the squadron of Admiral Graf von

Spee – would soon switch to the Pacific. And it did. Monmouth and the rest of Cradock’s motley squadron rounded Cape Horn on October 22.

It was late in the afternoon of November 1 when Cradock’s force sighted von Spee’s – more numerous, faster, more modern, more heavily armed – some 30 miles west of the port of Coronel. Cradock, in his flagship HMS Good Hope (even older than Monmouth), offered battle.

Silhouetted against the setting sun, the British ships presented inviting targets and, once night had fallen, the burning superstructures of Good Hope and Monmouth continued to guide the German gunners.

After taking three dozen hits, a terrible internal explosion tore the heart out of the Good Hope. The glowing remains of her hull vanished into the night. After less than an hour of battle, she was gone.

But despite taking a similar pummelling the Monmouth was not only still afloat, but her sailors had dealt with most of the fires. In the darkness she stuttered away from the scene of battle as the Germans tried in vain to find her. Perhaps she might escape.

But then a latecomer to the battle, the cruiser Nürnberg, arrived and sighted smoke from three funnels.

As the Germans closed on the unknown vessel, they switched on their searchlights.

The beams revealed a ship heeling increasingly to port, her forward 6in turret simply blown away, yet the White Ensign still flew.

From a range of less than 2,000ft, the Nürnberg opened fire and hammered away at the Monmouth.

Still she did not strike her colours. Nürnberg’s captain, von Schönberg, opened fire once more. Parts of the ship’s side and deck were simply torn away and slowly the Monmouth turned over, her Ensign still flying.



Class:	County-class armoured cruiser
Builder:	London and Glasgow Shipbuilding Company, Govan
Cost:	£979,591 (upwards of £100m today)
Launched:	November 13 1901
Commissioned:	December 2 1903
Displacement:	9,800t
Length:	463ft 6in (141.3m)
Beam:	66ft (20.1m)
Draught:	25ft (7.6m)
Speed:	23-24kts
Complement:	678
Propulsion:	31 x Belleville boilers providing steam for 4-cylinder triple-extension steam engines driving two shafts
Armament:	14 x BL 6in Mk VII guns 10 x 12lb quick-firing guns 3 x 3lb quick-firing guns 2 x 18in torpedo tubes below the waterline
Armour:	3½in-2in (deck) 4in (belt) 5in (barbettes and turrets)

Karl von Schönberg signalled Graf Spee: “Have sunk enemy armoured cruiser.” The admiral replied: “Bravo, Nürnberg. Squadron commander.”

She fought to the last. For after the battle, two of Schönberg’s crew told him that Monmouth’s officers had sounded a whistle and recalled their men, who were working on plugging leaks, back to the guns for the final battle.



PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

GIVEN the number of times they have been called upon in their reincarnation as commandos over the past seven decades, it’s surprising that the Royal Marines weren’t major players in Desert Storm (whereas they were key to ousting Saddam Hussein a dozen years later).

But where the men of 40 and 45 Commando were very much in demand was in the aftermath of the brief, but brutal, war to liberate Kuwait.

The victims of genocidal repression throughout Saddam’s regime – upwards of 200,000 people were killed – the Kurds of northern Iraq took advantage of their oppressor’s defeat to rise up in the spring of 1991.

Unbowed by his mauling at the hands of the Allies, Saddam responded as only he knew how: brutally. An estimated 1½ million Kurds fled, 20,000 of them dying on the trek towards the Turkish border.

Unlike with the massacres in the 1980s, this time the world took notice.

3 Commando Brigade spearheaded the British response Operation Haven – “to build camps to accommodate a potentially huge tide of humanity that comprises the world’s largest refugee nation” – supported by the wings of the Commando Helicopter Force.

Operation Haven (also known by its Americans cover name, Provide Comfort) is largely forgotten by Britons (whereas the 1990-91 war in the south of Iraq is not).

Yet at its peak, more than a dozen nations committed a force totalling 20,000 troops for three months; 40 per cent of the Royal Marines were committed to the four-month-long operation.

They found people not just in terror for their lives at the hand of Saddam’s forces, but also plagued by bandits in the mountains of northern Iraq, and illness. Disease – especially among Kurdish children – was rife; seven out of ten child deaths were under five years of age.

An estimated 15,000 Kurds died during the uprising and subsequent flight into the mountains.

Without the international intervention, however, “we would all be dead,” one Kurdish rebel leader said.

As for the Royal Marines, then Defence Secretary Tom King singled them out for praise in the Commons as Operation Haven drew to a close. “Others have played their part, but none better than 3 Commando Brigade,” he told fellow MPs.

■ This picture (GLF 545) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



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More pieces slotting



THIS is the man who will be the first seagoing captain of the Britain's new aircraft carrier.

Cdre Jerry Kyd has been announced as the first commanding officer of HMS Queen Elizabeth, the biggest warship the Royal Navy has ever had.

The hugely-experienced officer – in a career spanning nearly 30 years he's been navigator of HMS Ark Royal and later her captain, as well as commanding officer of HMS Monmouth and HMS Illustrious, in charge of Britannia Royal Naval College and is currently in command of the UK's amphibious task group – will take charge of the 65,000-tonne leviathan in the summer of 2015.

The following year he will take the carrier – launched by the Queen on July 4 this year – to sea as she begins her trials.

Cdre Kyd was told personally of his appointment by the First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas.

"I am, of course, tremendously honoured to have been appointed as the first commanding officer of our HMS Queen Elizabeth," Cdre Kyd said.

"She really cements us in the very top league of world class Navies and more importantly enhances our ability to defend our country."

"By anyone's yardstick this is an exciting new era for the Royal Navy, defence and the nation as we regenerate a fast jet carrier strike capability at sea; I am delighted to be part of this exciting journey."

The sea trials in 2016 are the first stage of a complex period of training as the Queen Elizabeth prepares for front-line duties.

The fast jets – the F35 Lightning II, currently undergoing trials involving Royal Navy and RAF personnel in the USA – will join the carrier in 2018.

Admiral Zambellas said Cdre Kyd was "the right man to lead this iconic warship's first ship's company".

He continued: "Jerry has jet carrier command background, decades of operational experience under his belt."

"Until he assumes command in mid-2015, Jerry will develop the key skills, international relationships and industrial partnerships to prepare for his command, marking another important milestone in our journey with the RAF to regenerate fast jet carrier capability as part of our nation's war-fighting credibility."

As well as the enormous national effort going into building the ship – and her sister HMS Prince of Wales – there's a similar effort to train her sailors, aircrew and ground crew so they are ready when Queen Elizabeth deploys on operations at the end of this decade.

Some 380 personnel are being trained aboard US warships and the French Carrier Strike Group as part of the Long Lead Skills Programme over the next eight years (see right and above right).

"This will be the largest flight deck the Royal Navy has ever operated and we have to have those skills in place for when the Queen Elizabeth becomes operational," said Cdre Kyd.

"There is also a careful set of plans in place where we have been taking the opportunity to use the US carriers to train our flight deck handlers in advance of joining the ship."

"It is about training our young people in advance with sustainable, professional skills that will carry them through their Service, not only with the new aircraft carrier but also the Royal Navy of the future."

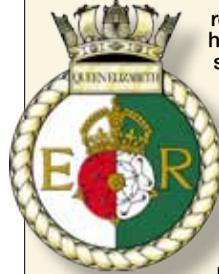
WE'VE repeatedly referred to HMS Queen Elizabeth as a gigantic jigsaw – perhaps the biggest ever attempted: six shipyards around the UK building huge segments, plus a myriad of smaller companies in the supply chain across the land, all supporting 10,000 jobs.

But it's not just the physical construction of the 65,000-tonne leviathan which requires the skilful choreography of thousands of different parts – ensuring the human element is ready is just as crucial. Trained pilots. Engineers. Ops room specialists. Aircraft armourers. Deck handlers.

That jigsaw is also slowly, but purposefully, coming together. This past month alone, half a dozen **naval airmen** have completed their nine-month stint on USS Harry S Truman, learning the art of moving fast jets and helicopters safely around a flight deck only slightly larger than that on the QE and her sister Prince of Wales.

Aboard the largest warship in Western Europe, **FS Charles de Gaulle**, three Royal Navy officers experienced the French *porte-avions*' key winter deployment to the Gulf – paving the way not just for the RN's return to traditional carrier operations, but the impending Anglo-French Combined Joint Expeditionary Force.

And finally, shaping all this effort – from the ship's point of view – come mid-2015, will be **Cdre Jerry Kyd**, who has been appointed as Queen Elizabeth's first Commanding Officer.



FOUR Royal Navy officers completed a three-month stint with France's carrier task force on her key winter deployment.

Operation Belleau Wood saw the aircraft carrier FS Charles de Gaulle and her escorts – one destroyer, one frigate, plus a support ship – head to the Gulf with the principal aim of working with US carrier forces.

Lt David Roberts acted as a fighter controller, directing Rafale and Super Étendard jets from the carrier's *salle d'opérations* (operations room) while Lt Cdr James Taylor and Adrian Hill served on the French Navy's battle staff, Lt Cdr Taylor planning aerial operations, Lt Cdr Hill planning fighter operations.

And aboard the air defence frigate FS Forbin – similar to the Type 45 destroyers which do the same job for the Royal Navy – Lt Steve Aitken served as pilot of the NH90 helicopter.

The quartet are attached to the French Navy as part of a double-pronged effort by the Royal Navy: to pave the way for the UK's next-generation carriers which will be half as big again as France's flagship; and to pave the way for Anglo-French Combined Joint Expeditionary Force which will be formed in two years' time.

"We'll very soon see the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth which represents a new era of British naval aviation, so participation in Operation Belleau Wood is a unique opportunity for us to maintain our expertise," said Lt Cdr Hill, who's a veteran of operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and counter-piracy off the Horn of Africa in the Royal Navy's 'eyes in the skies', the Airborne Surveillance and Control Sea Kings.

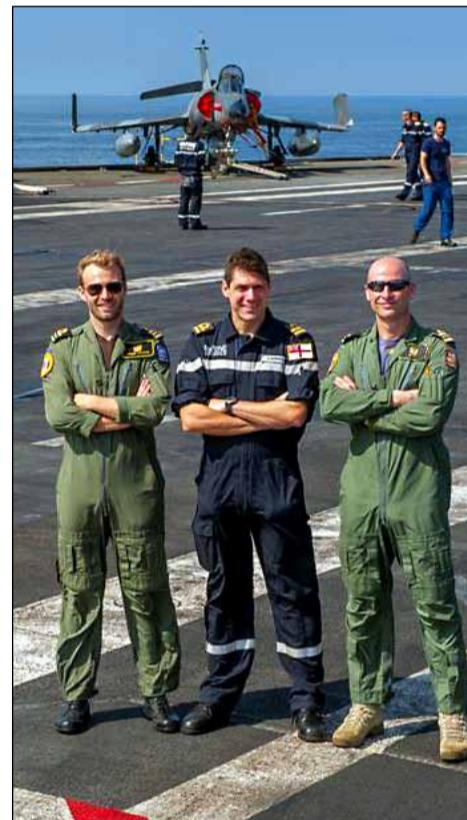
Lt Roberts was impressed by the Charles de Gaulle, her 20 jets, early warning aircraft and helicopters and the glimpse she offers of operations involving Queen Elizabeth at the end of this decade.

"What surprised me most about the carrier is its size. I've served aboard Ark Royal and Illustrious, but they're much smaller," he said.

"I hope to use what I've learned during my time as an exchange officer in France. British and French sailors are both motivated and dedicated – and well trained. Maybe that is why we get along so well, even if there are a few culture differences."

Lt Aitken added: "I've been really impressed by the commitment and professionalism of the French sailors."

The exchange programme with the French Navy has been operating for some time – there were Royal



● *Gaulle of fame...* Lt Cdr James Taylor, Lt David Roberts and Lt Cdr Adrian Hill on the flight deck of France's flagship

Navy sailors serving aboard the Charles de Gaulle during the Anglo-French Cougar exercises in the autumn of 2012, while last winter a Fleet Air Arm Lynx flight deployed with the French frigate FS Surcouf and struck a blow against pirates.

For fellow *rosbifs* thinking of following these exchange officers, Lt Cdr Hill has provided a comprehensive account of life with the Marine Nationale.



● A Hawkeye AWACs aircraft is manoeuvred on Charles de Gaulle's flight deck.

Charles de Gaulle is very much the jewel in the crown of the French Navy – if not the French Armed Forces – and rightly so: 42,000 tonnes of nuclear-powered power projection is a serious bit of kit.

Her Bois Belleau deployment was her main event for 2014 – it saw us participating in exercises and operations alongside CTF 50 and the Harry S Truman Carrier Strike Group, as well as smaller exercises with the Saudis, Emiratis and Qataris.

So, life on a big nuclear aircraft carrier – what's that all about? Well, on the plus side, there are fewer RASes, the glasses don't fall off the shelf in the bar when you go over 15kts (or was that just HMS Invincible?) and there's never a shortage of piping hot water. On the downside, fewer RASes means less fresh food (yes, the French flagship has served such haute-cuisine as lukewarm tinned ravioli as a meal on more than one occasion!), and sat on top of a nuclear reactor means you can say goodbye to those lovely little Mediterranean Island port visits – or any nice port visits for that matter...

Having a ship with a bit of clout does have advantages. The Americans take you seriously when you deploy to the Gulf for example, and nearing the end of an extremely successful period of bilateral cooperation at a level never before seen, the French Navy has confirmed its position as a big fish and proven that the concept of Carrier Enabled Power Projection is an essential element to any nation's ambitions as a main player on the global stage.

So how did a 'bag man' end up here? After serving in Afghanistan, followed by two years supporting their operations from a desk, I found myself back at 849 NAS as an instructor. When my boss asked me if I was interested in an exchange job in Toulon, I didn't have to think about it for long.

Several short weeks later I was at the Defence School of Languages where I learned, amongst other things, just how long ago it was that I took (and failed) 'O' Level French. Six months of intensive tuition taught me my *tartiflette* from my *cacahuète*, however, and off I went to find a house in Toulon from which to base my new life of wine, cheese and baguettes.

There are very marked differences in the way our two nations go about their business. Unless you have your passport, driving licence, both grandparents' birth certificates and your dog's vaccination record, you will have no chance of getting even a car pass

'This is from the heart: you guys'



● LA Brown – one of six Britons on the Truman – shepherds his US shipmates during a fire-fighting drill on the flat-top

Picture: Mass Communication Specialist Emily Blair, US Navy

BRITISH sailors who've supported operations aboard US super-carrier Harry S Truman have been branded 'awesome' by their US counterparts.

Half a dozen flight deck handlers have spent nine months aboard the flat-top, whose jets have been flying missions over Afghanistan in support of Allied troops on the ground.

The handlers – whose job is it to marshal more than 70 jet and propeller-driven aircraft, plus helicopters around the deck of the 100,000-tonne leviathan – are part of a training programme to pave the way for the Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

Both ships, currently under construction in Rosyth – with Queen Elizabeth due to be launched by her namesake this July – are three times the size of HMS Illustrious and Ocean.

The Royal Navy hasn't operated a traditional 'big deck' carrier since HMS Ark Royal IV left service in the late 1970s, so

the exchange with the US Navy – the Long Lead Specialist Skills programme – is vital for smooth flying operations from the Queen Elizabeth when she begins her trials later this decade.

Since the beginning of 2013, RN personnel have been serving with the assault ship USS Kearsarge and the super-carriers USS Dwight D Eisenhower and now the Truman.

After undergoing fire-fighting training in Norfolk – the world's biggest naval base and home to the bulk of the US Navy's carrier fleet – the British handlers joined the Truman as she sailed to relieve the USS Nimitz on Operation Enduring Freedom, the American codename for the mission in Afghanistan.

Aboard the carrier, the Brits spent three days and nights observing flying operations as a taster of things to come.

"Even though we didn't have a clue what was really going on there were aircraft launching

g neatly into place



Charles de Gaulle's flight deck while (right) an impressive array of Rafale jets



Close-up view of a Rafale jet on the flight deck



for the base. Getting a bank account is even harder, and negotiating to get your children into the local school with only six months of language training under your belt? Well, good luck...

It is truly something that – as an English Royal Marines colonel in Toulon told me when I arrived – must be approached with an expeditionary outlook and a sense of humour in equal measures.

Four months into the job then, and what have I learnt? Firstly, Toulon appears to be a great place to be based – despite the fact that by the time this ship gets back home I will have spent more time on board than actually in Toulon.

It sits on the south coast between Marseille and Nice, has a host of beaches and seaside towns within easy reach, and is only a short drive to the southern Alps, ten miles to the Bandol wine region and just an overnight ferry to Corsica. In fact, in just over four hours on the excellent TGV you can be in the centre of Paris. The sea temperatures get up to the mid 20s Celsius in the summer and the Mistral blows just about enough to keep the kitesurfers among us happy. The Stade Mayol is right in the middle of town so we can go and watch Jonny Wilko kick a ball around, followed by a few wets in the bar afterwards.

Professionally, the French are a hard working bunch. As part of the air ops team at FRMFOR (the deployable staff of the Navy based in the HQ at Toulon and similar to the RN's battlestaff in Portsmouth) we work with some very capable and driven people – a job here is usually a springboard to greater things, and this is reflected in the quality of the staff employed. And as a NATO HQ, the working language is officially English, so the standard of spoken English is generally excellent, which is great, but it does make it a lot harder to progress my French, especially when everyone is so keen to practise their own foreign language skills.

And what of the carrier itself?

With ten Rafale and ten Super Es, an organic air-to-air refuelling capability, two E-2C Hawkeyes and a handful of helicopters for SAR/plane guard and logistic missions, it is self-contained and potent, able to project French political will over land, sea and the space in between.

The steam catapult is lifted directly from the Americans which helped make cross decking with the Truman relatively straightforward.

The visit of Super Hornets and the COD plane

proved this concept, and we all had burgers and Budweiser for dinner that night as a result; I'm sure that unquestionable benefit was overlooked when the UK decided to drop cats and traps from our QEC carriers...

Accompanied by an Atlantique 2 maritime patrol aircraft, a submarine, an Horizon-class destroyer (think T45 with baguettes) – in this case the Forbin – a frigate (FS Jean de Vienne) and a supply ship (Meuse) for the occasional RAS, and with a 2* staff embarked, it's difficult to find fault with their formula.

So what's not to like? I have painted a fairly rosy picture so far, and to be honest there is very little I can think of that is too bad about the whole deal.

The French have bought into the Entente Cordiale and Lancaster House agreement wholeheartedly and recognise the value of shared skills, knowledge and experience. The recent *Livre Blanc* (their equivalent to our SDSR 2010) has been fairly hard hitting – they are being forced to find efficiencies in their armed forces and are facing the same pain as we in the RN have been going through for the last few years.

Mutual cooperation is one way to do this, and projects such as the increasingly important Combined Joint Expeditionary Force are just one such example. So exchanges between RN and the French Navy will only grow, hopefully both in numbers and importance.

Currently, there are two of us in FRMFOR air plans, one fighter controller aboard Charles de Gaulle, a Super E pilot in Landivisiau and a Lynx pilot flying the Panther from the Forbin. Another Brit embed in the FRMFOR Amphib section, one in N5 and yet another teaching in the submarine section of Toulon naval base – soon we'll qualify for our own NAAFI.

Moving to France and trying to get a family set up and established has been a real challenge. This is starting to change in terms of pre-move help and in-country support from the likes of the Global Admin Unit in Glasgow, but it's a long road. And there is even talk of bringing back some language training for the spouses, which can only be good news since my wife had none, and ten weeks after starting work in France I disappeared to sea for three months leaving her to deal with everything in a completely foreign language and armed only with a French/English dictionary. "

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Guys are awesome...'

and recovering what seemed like everywhere, but the aircraft directors were orchestrating what seemed like a dance of moving aircraft each knowing exactly what to do," said CPO(AH) Nathan Milner, who headed the British team on the Truman.

"This was a real eye opener for me and the team and a completely different tempo to anything we had seen before."

The Royal Navy team had various tests to pass: plane handler (responsible for chocking, chaining and making aircraft safe); tractor drivers (helping aircraft directors move planes around safely); elevator operator (in charge of the Truman's powerful side lifts, similar to those on the Queen Elizabeth); and finally aircraft director (in charge of aircraft movements, parking and taxiing aircraft including spotting and backing the catapults).

Finally the Brits were given charge of different parts of the flight deck – which is only half

an acre larger than the Queen Elizabeth's – while in CPO Milner's case, he successfully qualified as deck caller and flight deck chief, allowing him to take charge of all flight operations on the Truman.

"The whole experience has been incredible and an amazing opportunity to test ourselves at the highest and most demanding echelon of maritime aviation," said CPO Milner.

"It has been very demanding – working extremely long hours six days a week with a no-fly day on a Sunday – although not an RN no-fly day as helicopters still operated.

"Each member of my team has been a credit to the Royal Navy with their attitude, leadership and professional ability. They've been able to learn and adapt to different surroundings, setting them apart from their US Navy colleagues, earning great praise off the Truman's air department."

Cdr Davis, the carrier's aircraft handling officer, said the British sailors had been a credit

to their country and their Navy. "It has been my distinct pleasure in working with a group of such dedicated individuals.

"Their contributions have greatly impacted the operational readiness of launching and recovering aircraft in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Excellence is not an act, but a habit. This is what the Royal Navy/US Navy team have been so dedicated to. Excellence became a habit."

He told CPO Milner as he left the Truman: "Chief, this is from the heart: you guys are awesome!"

CPO Milner and his team will head up to Rosyth later this year to brief the QE's ship's company on their experiences with the American carrier.

As for the exchange programme, it's continuing with Royal Navy pilots, ground crew, mechanics and carrier warfare experts working alongside our American cousins, while more deck handlers are lined up to join the George H W Bush and the assault ship USS Bataan.

Pictures: Marine Nationale



Take it all in.

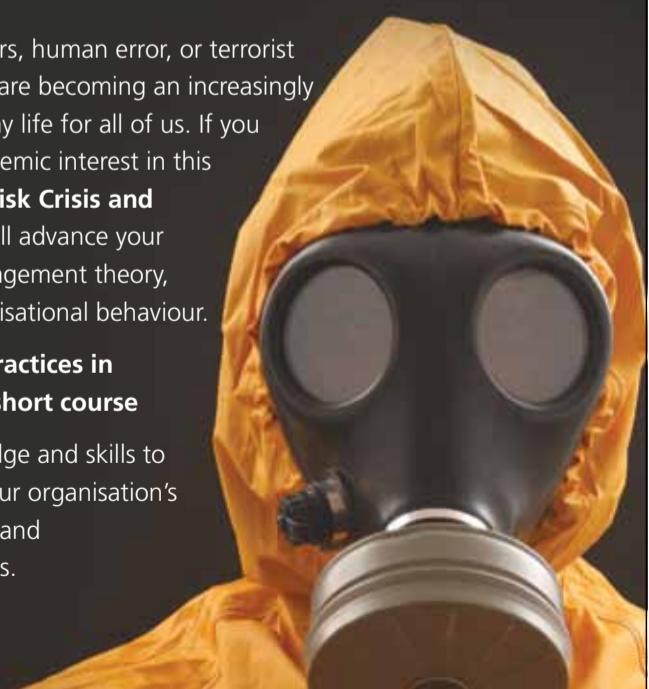
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Sword.Beach.



BUT not that one.

This is how the Royal Marines hit the beaches in Cornwall when the sun is shining.

SA80 rifles in hand, the men of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, swarm ashore from Offshore Raiding Craft at picture-postcard Cawsand Beach in Cornwall – just some of the 700 Royal Marines involved in Exercise South-West Sword, a week-long workout for the green berets and the nation's flagship, HMS Bulwark, in Plymouth Sound.

Although this looks like full fury and thunder from the Royal Navy's elite marine infantry – this year celebrating their 350th birthday – it was actually a fairly gentle exercise as 40 Commando return to their amphibious roots.

The men of 40, based at Norton Manor Camp near Taunton, have most recently been in action in their native Somerset, helping out with the flood relief efforts in communities inundated during the winter storms.

Come May, however, they will take over as the UK's Lead Commando Group – the Royal Marines on-call to respond to world events, should the government require an instant military

response. Their steed for such an action would be Bulwark, flagship of the Fleet – and also the UK's Response Force Task Group which, like the lead commando group, is also at short notice to react to an international crisis, be it war (Libya in 2011) or peace (the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines at the end of last year).

Before there can be any thought of storming ashore, however, both the marines on the ground and their staff must grasp the basics of amphibious

warfare – which remains the most complex military operation there is.

South-West Sword was billed as a 'wader' exercise – an amphibious landing played out at a slower-than-normal pace so that all involved can hone their skills.

So after getting used to life aboard Bulwark, and getting to know its assault routes – specially-designed wide passageways allowing Royal Marines and all their kit to move either to the loading dock and waiting landing and raiding craft, or the flight deck, for the waiting Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force – the commandos came ashore by air and sea, as 40's headquarters staff choreographed everything from Bulwark's impressive operations and planning room.

Lt Col Alex Janzen, 40 Commando's Commanding Officer, said the exercise was "an important warm-up" for the next stage of the unit's training ahead of assuming the on-call role from their comrades in 42 Commando.

For hot on the heels of South-West Sword was the biggest NATO exercise of the year, Joint Warrior – the twice-yearly test of UK armed forces, to which our allies are also invited.

Ten nations accepted the invite to the latest Joint Warrior – more than 30 warships and 12,000 personnel from across the alliance, and some 60 RN and RAF aircraft were due to be involved in the training from Cape Wrath to the Firth of Clyde as Navy News went to press.

And later this year, 40 will join Bulwark again to take part in the Royal Navy's headline deployment of the autumn, Cougar 14, to the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, 40 Cdo



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Royals receive update



● Personnel work out on the ice next to Protector

Pictures: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell, HMS Protector

Hit the snow!

YOU'RE never too cold for a bit of keep fit.

Yes, even when there's deep snow on the ground, there's no let up from HMS Protector's physical trainer to ensure his shipmates are at the peak of physical fitness.

The Portsmouth-based icebreaker is coming to the end of the 2013-14 'summer season' surveying the waters around Antarctica – the first of two Austral summers she'll spend off the frozen continent before returning to the warmer waters of the UK.

As well as posing challenges to the bridge team, safely guiding the ice patrol ship around as she surveys remote waters and supports scientific research, the weather conditions also upset LPT Gareth Smith's normal fitness regime.

On most Royal Navy ships, the upper deck is a physical training instructor's playground – using it for circuits, while the flight deck is ideal for workouts when not needed by the helicopter.

In the southern ocean, however, HMS Protector's upper deck is out of bounds beyond the Falklands because it's too cold.

The ship's lower hold is an alternative venue for Gareth's workouts – but space is limited, as is the session the PTI can organise, and the air is far from fresh.

But on Protector's third work period amid the ice this Austral summer, with an hour or so free in the ship's working programme, the trainer seized the opportunity to arrange a workout session on the ice.

"On the rare occasions we have been able to get people on the ice, the ship's company has

done everything from playing football to having Christmas dinner – trimmings and all," Gareth explained.

"On this occasion, the ship was surrounded by ice for miles around and the decision was taken to allow people on to the ice.

"All those who wanted to had managed to get down, stretch their legs and generally frolic on the ice."

"The idea then struck me: after a month of being crammed in the ship's lower hold, if we'd played football, what prevented me from taking a circuit? A chilly one, granted, but one in unbelievably pure air, with an amazing backdrop and without the constraints of space."

Fifteen minutes later, Gareth was in his PTI kit and a dozen shipmates had joined him on the ice – deemed strong enough to take the weight of 15 souls.

"Once people got in motion and were in full swing of their exercises then the only real adverse effect of the cold was the icy chill of the Antarctic air in your lungs when inhaling deep breaths after completing yet another burpee [squat thrust] – that and the constant danger of someone getting distracted from press-ups and lobbing a sizeable snow ball."

After the fun on the ice Gareth was in the unique position in the Royal Navy of being able to lead all his circuit-goers down to Protector's sauna (the ship was built for the merchant navy before being bought by the RN, hence the luxury) for a 'warm down' and the chance to stretch aching muscles.



● LPT Gareth Smith urges shipmates to complete their press-ups on the ice

Ledbury renews town ties

SAILORS from HMS Ledbury spent the weekend in Ledbury to reaffirm their ties with the small Herefordshire town.

Much was crammed into those two days: a match against Ledbury Swifts FC (who prevailed over the sailors 6-2); a tour of Weston's cider factory; and a buffet dinner organised by the town's council at the Royal British Legion branch, where more sport was laid on – skittles (again the locals prevailed).

The highlight of the visit was the Freedom of the Town parade on Sunday morning.

Although the current HMS Ledbury has been around for nearly 35 years and her predecessor, a wartime destroyer, served with distinction in the Arctic and especially the Mediterranean, the ship's twin town only conferred its highest honour in 2007.

The ship's company formed up behind the

Guard, Colours and Freedom Scroll Party to march through the town, joined by Ross-on-Wye Sea Cadets, Hereford Army Cadets and members of Ledbury's Royal British Legion, while the Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth provided musical accompaniment.

The Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, Lady Darnley, and the town's mayor, Cllr Terry Widdows, took the salute.

Afterwards all marchers were invited to a civic reception.

"We thoroughly enjoyed the experience and warmth of a hometown visit as well as the privilege and honour of exercising the Freedom of Ledbury," said the minehunter's CO Lt Cdr Simon Pressdee.

"We look forward to our affiliation going from strength to strength."

ENJOYING a cup of tea and nibbles with the heir to the throne are the men and women of HMS Dragon, who told the Prince of Wales about their seven-month mission in the Gulf and eastern Mediterranean.

Meanwhile aboard HMS Illustrious, his wife, the Duchess of Cornwall, was learning about the work of the carrier's crew – and her medics especially – who explained how the ship helped the people of the Philippines.

In a busy day-long visit to Portsmouth Naval Base and the Solent, the couple toured the new Mary Rose museum before going their separate ways.

The Prince of Wales went off to the 'Welsh warship', undergoing exercises off the Isle of Wight, while his wife was hosted aboard Lusty alongside in the naval base.

The couple were reunited at the end of the visit as they jointly met 30 families on board Illustrious.

The Prince spent two hours aboard HMS Dragon where he was briefed on the highlights of the deployment, before seeing a demonstration in the operations room of the ship's potent air defence capabilities.

He also presented NATO Libya medals to Lt Cdr Claire Thompson and ET James Smith, and Long Service and Good Conduct medals to POs Michael Delaney and Timothy Mills.

"We had all been looking forward to this visit by the Prince of Wales, and I was really pleased to hear that he would be presenting me with my NATO medal for operations off the coast of Libya," said ET Smith. "This is the first time I have met Royalty in my time in the Navy and it is a day I will remember long into the future."

Aboard Illustrious the Duchess learned about the ship's five-month deployment to the Mediterranean and Gulf which included disaster relief in the Philippines in the wake of



● The Prince of Wales aboard HMS Dragon



● The Duchess of Cornwall on HMS Illustrious

Typhoon Haiyan.

The helicopter carrier spent three weeks delivering emergency aid supplies to the islands and repairing key services and broken infrastructure.

In her role as Commodore-in-Chief Royal Naval Medical Services, the Duchess met 26 of the ship's medics who provided a wide range of medical care to islanders affected by the devastation.

Radiographer PO(MT) Zara Rathbone, 31, from Birmingham, described her experiences on Operation Patwin. She said: "The

Duchess was lovely and really easy to talk to. It was nice to get some recognition for what we do from somebody like that."

The Duchess also witnessed a casualty-handling exercise and toured Illustrious' medical facilities.

"We were all thrilled to host the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall and to demonstrate how the ship provides modern and effective medical support as a fundamental part of the United Kingdom's military capabilities," said Capt Mike Utley, the carrier's commanding officer.

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EVENTS

APR
8-10

'Stopped Interrupting'

This Admiral's Players comedy by Neil Broadhead takes a tongue-in-cheek look at irony and coincidence.

After one of the local amateur dramatics group's actors is killed in a car accident, only the driver – who also happens to be the author of the play – is available to replace him.

The event takes place at Fisher Hall, HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth. For tickets, call 07906 227709

APR
13

Virgin London Marathon 2014

Starting at Greenwich Park, and finishing some 26 miles later at Buckingham Palace, the Virgin London Marathon remains one of the greatest events in the UK marathon calendar. We wish all our runners the very best of luck on the day!

For up-to-the-minute race information, see www.virginmoneylondonmarathon.com.

Time for Twickers

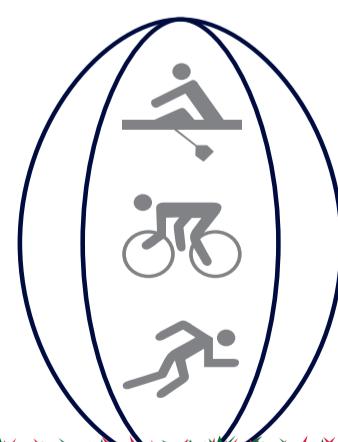
THERE'S only one month left to take part in this year's Road to Twickenham challenge.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is impressed with how creative some of its fundraisers have been in tackling its most physically demanding fundraising campaign, which concludes at the big Army v Navy match, Twickenham Stadium, on May 3.

First up, PTIs at HMS Collingwood have pledged to climb approximately nine miles of rope as part of their journey to TW2 7BA, while the rest of the team makes up the remaining 70 miles by rowing machine.

Not ones to be easily beaten however, Royal Marines from CSS Squadron Commando Helicopter Force have decided to cover the distance from their base in Yeovilton to Twickenham using a variety of methods including: a one-mile swim, 26-mile run, 24-mile row and a 60-mile cycle, all within 14 hours.

To join in, simply contact the RNRMC's fundraising team (fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk) or set up your own fundraising page on Virgin Money Giving.



the road to
TWICKENHAM

Auction promised treats for sailors

MONEY can't buy you love – but it can buy you the chance to be the captain of a warship for the day.

Whilst at sea in the Mediterranean, the ship's company of HMS Montrose took some time out to hold a charity auction of promises to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

The auction saw fierce bidding for some unique prizes and some of the sailors took the opportunity to treat themselves after a busy operational period away from home.

The many prizes on offer to the highest bidder included a bath in the CO's cabin, a driving lesson in the jet-powered sea boats, the choice of setting the menu for the whole ship for a day, and even a full day off work alongside (known as a "make and mend" in the Royal Navy).

In total, the 18 lots on offer sold to raise over £3,100, all of which will go directly to the RNRMC at the end of the seven-month deployment.

The highest bid of the night came from the PO's mess, who clubbed together to make a joint bid for dinner in the Wardroom served by the officers, while LCH Mark Young donated £80 for the chance to drive the ship "like he stole it" during a man overboard exercise or 'MOBEX'.

PO Andrew "Nobby" Styles, who bid £420 to be the first person across the gangway on return from deployment, said: "It was a highly-contested auction with some serious bidding going on, but I'm very happy to have held my nerve and come out on top for a number of the lots."

Writer Natalie Parkes, who was part of the syndicate that won the right to tattoo the captain, said: "We're torn between a bunny rabbit, a picture of the current First Sea Lord or – so that he never forgets us – we might go for all of our names."



● ET(ME) Ethan Curley during his day as CO of HMS Montrose



● AB Masterton won the 'make-and mend' prize



● Auctioneer LET(WE) Marc 'Bobby' Ball

Pictures: L(Phot) Alex Knott

Designs sought for cards

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is calling for entries for its Children's Christmas Card Competition.

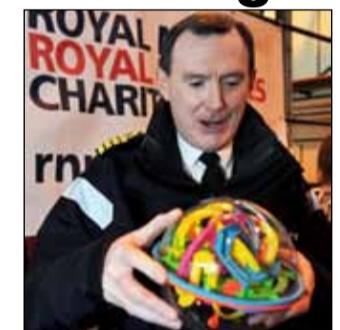
Children and young people (up to the age of 18) are invited to etch, sketch, paint, collage and colour a Christmas-themed design that could be turned into a Christmas card and sold by the Charity.

Jessica Ortlepp, Head of Marketing and Communications, said: "This is a wonderful opportunity for youngsters to see their work in print. The competition is open to all ages and abilities – from toddler to teen – and with five winning entries to be selected I hope to be overwhelmed by outstanding entries in the months ahead."

The RNRMC is hoping that parents, teachers, after school clubs and camp co-ordinators will encourage children to be involved.

Entries must be made on the competition template, available at www.rnrmc.org.uk/christmas2014. The competition closes on Friday May 30.

Addictive challenge



● Capt Trevor Gulley tries the Addict-A-Ball challenge

challenges to compliment the cakes and refreshments.

"I think it must be every engineer's dream to have the opportunity to demonstrate their own problem-solving skills."

Transport quest for CTF

A GROUP of Royal Navy sailors are aiming to run, row and ride the distance from their headquarters in Portsmouth to Bahrain and back.

Whilst deployed to Bahrain as Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) each of the 24 sailors will run, row and ride just over two miles a day equalling the 6,400 mile target.

They will be utilising the gym at the American Naval Base in Bahrain, where they will be based, to achieve the challenge and hope to raise more than £2,000 during their five-month deployment.

"This is a great opportunity to raise money for the Royal Navy's charity partner the RNRMC whilst being deployed away from the UK," said CPO Andy Gibbs, 43, who is organising the event.

Cdr Jeremy Blunden, 50, who is commanding the Task Force said: "I'm really pleased that my team are still finding time to think about others while deployed on operations."

"This is exactly what we expect from the life blood of our service"

FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

ROBERT TAFF GOVIER



● Robert 'Taff' Glover took part in an Ironman challenge

Diving in for RNRMC

ON APRIL 6, Taff took to the (usually idyllic) surroundings of Hobie Beach, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, to take part in the Ironman South Africa Challenge 2014.

Rather than take a quiet dip however, Taff ploughed through a 2.4-mile "please

don't mention sharks" sea swim, followed by a 112-mile ride and 26.4-mile run.

At the time of printing, Taff has raised two-thirds of his £3,000 target for the RNRMC. Visit www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RobertGovier to make a donation.

GO THE DISTANCE! MAKE EVERY MILE COUNT!

You can help us wherever you are in the world by taking part in a run, row, swim or cycle.

Your challenge is to cover the number of miles you are from Twickenham before the Army v Navy rugby game. For example, if you are based in Portsmouth, you could row 80 miles. If you are based in Lympstone you could cycle 180 miles. You could do this individually or as part of a team, with your starting point being your unit, ship's current location or your affiliated town. Raising sponsorship will help your charity care for you, your family and oppos.

Register now and measure up to the challenge! Search 'Road to Twickenham' on the Virgin Money Giving website or contact: fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk T: 023 9254 8289

Registered charity in England and Wales (1117794) and Scotland (SC041898).

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Following in heroes' footsteps

A ROYAL Navy senior rating challenged shoppers in Plymouth to guess how many miles he can cycle in one day as he prepares to take to the road for Help for Heroes.

PO Alastair Fergie, pictured, from Whitleigh, has been chosen to take part in the charity's 340-mile Big Battlefield Bike Ride in June this year.

As part of his fund-raising he set-up his turbo training bike in Drake Circus for a day and cycled from 9am until 6pm.

The 37-year-old said: "I'm a fan of cycling and already cycle a bit. I completed a 400-mile charity cycle ride from Faslane to Bury St Edmunds while I was serving on HMS Victorious and I ride to work and back, but I've had to step up my training for this ride."

The Big Battlefield Bike Ride is one of a series of events organised by Help for Heroes to raise money to support injured Servicemen and women.

This year's ride will take place from June 1-8, from Brussels to Paris. With this year being the centenary of the start of the First World War, the route will follow much of the Western Front.

PO Fergie, currently based at HMS Raleigh as an instructor within the Defence Maritime Logistics School, said: "It is great to be following in the footsteps of the brave people who fought on the Western Front, while doing something to raise money for today's heroes."

To support PO Fergie visit www.justgiving.com/Alastair-Fergie

Supporting veterans

TRAUMA Risk Management for Royal Marines Veterans (TRIM) was launched at the Royal Marines Museum, Southsea.

TRIM for veterans (T4V) provides a new tier of assistance to the RM Veteran community.

The project will be run as a pilot scheme for 30 months. If the pilot is successful the scheme will be expanded to include veterans from the Royal Navy.

One of the TRIM practitioners is Lyn Gannon, the RNBT's administration manager.

On completion of their service all leavers who have been engaged on operations will receive a TRIM leaving interview.

For further information visit www.trim4veterans.org

Safety first

THE Royal Star & Garter Home in Surbiton has received formal recognition from London Fire Brigade (LFB) for the voluntary fitting of a fire sprinkler system.

The home's 63 residents are disabled ex-Servicemen and women, including 26 residents in the specialist dementia care wing within the Home. The average age of the residents is 87.

Kent's crew help out hospice

YOUNGSTERS and their families in Kent are better off thanks to kind-hearted sailors and Royal Marines aboard the county's namesake warship.

Some of the crew from the Portsmouth-based frigate headed to Demelza House children's hospice in Sittingbourne to hand over charitable proceeds from Kent's deployment in 2013.

In the middle of patrols of the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean keeping the sea lanes safe for six months last year, the sailors and green berets found time to hold various fund-raising events.

A pizza night, barbecues on the flight deck and a mock village fair all helped to bring in the money.

The result was £2,664 raised for the hospice, which has been affiliated with the Type 23 frigate since 2001.

Staff at the hospice showed the Kent team around the facilities, including an indoor pool for hydro-therapy, music and sensory rooms, play areas and relaxation spaces.

"Everyone who toured the hospice was touched by the passion of the staff," said Lt Ben Dorrington.

"Having seen first hand the work conducted by the staff, we are extremely proud to support Demelza House."



● LET(ME) 'Taff' John tries out the children's play area at Demelza House

Capture memories to mark 150 years

SAILORS and their families are being urged to submit their seafaring memories to help a charity mark its 150th anniversary.

The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society, based in Banstead in Surrey, is in the planning stages of producing a book, which will be published in time to celebrate the landmark birthday in May 2015.

Members of the public with family and friends who have received help from or are connected in some way with the Society, both past and present, are encouraged to share their memories and anecdotes, which could be included in the book.

The book *Home from Sea*, whose title is taken from the poem by Robert Louis Stevenson and engraved as the epitaph on his gravestone, is being written by John Allan, a retired solicitor.

Mr Allan has a strong interest in British history, particularly in the maritime sector, and holds an MA in Maritime History from the University of Greenwich.

The illustrated story aims to give an insight into the society's 150-year history, including changes within the home, Britain's rich maritime heritage, how the home was affected by



● Some of the charity's residents pictured in 1867

both world wars and the growing support available to seafarers over the years.

This isn't the first time the charity has stepped into the literary world.

The Royal Alfred Story, by A Stewart McMillan, was published in 1965 to mark the first 100 years of the society.

Chief Executive of the society

Cdr Brian Boxall-Hunt said: "As the society prepares to celebrate its landmark birthday next year, it is an excellent opportunity to share with the public the society's rich and detailed history whilst looking after former seafarers during an unbroken 150 years."

"We have already discovered gems of information and some fantastic images from our

archives and held some vivid interviews – we look forward to being able to share all this next year."

Anyone who has anecdotes or memories of the society should telephone 01737 353763.

The charity, which was set up in 1865, provides housing, residential and nursing care to seafarers and their dependents.

Welsh valley debut

THE first Wales Home for Veterans, run by the charity Alabaré, is due to open in Pontypridd this year.

The creation of the new homes was made possible thanks to the £976,269 that Wales Homes for Veterans was awarded by the Armed Forces Covenant (Liber) fund in November 2013.

Under the initiative Alabaré will open homes in Pontypridd and Cardiff, Carmarthen and Swansea, and Wrexham.

Fifteen homes will provide 72 spaces for veterans from the Royal Navy, Army and RAF by the end of this year.

The charity already runs Homes for Veterans in Salisbury, Gloucestershire, Plymouth, Bristol, Weymouth, Fareham and Gosport.

The homes provide high-to-low-level support for homeless or vulnerable ex-Armed Forces personnel.

Since the scheme started in 2009, Alabaré has helped over 220 veterans.

Anyone wishing to support veterans should call Alabaré on 01722 322882 or visit www.alabare.co.uk

Key date for home

SSAFA Norton House, Selly Oak, a home-from-home for the relatives of injured Servicemen and women who are receiving hospital treatment in Birmingham, reunited former guests at a lunch to mark its fifth anniversary.

The house in Selly Oak is one of two Norton Homes run by national military charity SSAFA, which provides lifelong support for members of the Forces and their families.

The homes are close to the main military treatment centres at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court, Surrey.

Cash for project

THE Legatee Educational Trust has received £62,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for its Keeping Britain Afloat project.

Working with Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust and young people from the area, the project sets out to film the personal stories of 50 veterans who served as Chatham Ratings in the convoys of WW2.

The project will culminate in 2015 with a permanent exhibition at Chatham Historic Dockyard celebrating the 70th anniversary of the end of the second world war.

RBL grant

THE Forces in Mind Trust – set up to help ex-Servicemen and women make a successful transition back to civilian life – has awarded a grant of £73,098 to the Royal British Legion to double the sample size of their national survey of the Armed Forces Community.

Dream day

SIX members of HMS Defender's ship's company gave a helping hand to their affiliated charity, Dream-A-Way, by collecting an impressive £638.15 at Exeter's League Two clash with Portsmouth.

Veteran grateful for support



● John Dix

A BLIND veteran, who served in the Royal Navy and lost his sight many years later, has thanked national charity Blind Veterans UK for the support it has given him with his battle against sight loss.

This comes as the charity, formerly named St Dunstan's, continues to promote its No One Alone campaign which aims to reach out to the estimated 68,000-plus blind veterans who could be eligible for its free, lifelong and comprehensive support, but are not as yet aware that they qualify.

John Dix, 86, who lives in Pembrokeshire, Wales, joined the Royal Navy in 1947, aged 19. After training he served for eight years, eventually becoming an Acting Petty Officer Stoker.

It wasn't until many years after he was discharged from the Navy in 1954 that John lost his sight as a result of retinitis pigmentosa. As a visually impaired ex-Serviceman, John was able to apply for free support from Blind Veterans UK.

John said: "I remember when I first visited Blind Veterans UK and spent a week having my induction at one of its centres. I was totally amazed by all that they did for their veterans, as were all of the others who had just joined – it just seemed so extraordinary. All of the other veterans and I were treated so well. It felt, and still feels, like an extremely genuine and caring organisation.

"I have been on IT and art and craft courses with the charity,

which have been fantastic.

"My aim is to set up my own willow-weaving facility in my garage and eventually produce work that I can sell in aid of Blind Veterans UK."

Blind Veterans UK launched its No One Alone campaign in October 2012. Given research findings, the charity is particularly keen to reach the National Service generation of men, who are now in their 70s and 80s, trying to cope with a severe sight problem and unaware that their time in the Forces, however brief or long ago, means they are eligible for the charity's support.

If you are or know of a veteran with vision impairment, go to: www.noonealone.org.uk or telephone: 0800 389 7979.



Royal Marines 350
1664 - 2014
Timeless Distinction

Testing time for PTI pair

TWO Royal Marines took on a test of strength and endurance at HMS Raleigh to mark RM350.

Sgt Rob Garthland and Cpl Kris Foster's challenge involved flipping a tractor tyre 3,500 metres, a 3,500 metre run, row and swim, a rope climb of 350 metres and a Spartan 350 – seven sets of 50 bodyweight exercises. And to make things even more difficult the super-fit Royal Marine physical training instructors (PTI) did it all in one day.

The two Royal Marines met at the Commando Training Centre, Lympstone, in July 2001 when they both arrived for their initial training.

Sgt Garthland, 33, is currently serving at HMS Raleigh, while Cpl Foster is presently undergoing his Senior Command Course at Lympstone. Cpl Foster, aged 32, is due to replace Sgt Garthland at HMS Raleigh in October.

Sgt Garthland said: "I'm proud to be a Royal Marine. I'm the only Royal Marine PTI at HMS Raleigh and I wanted to do my bit to mark this special anniversary."

Cpl Foster said: "The comradeship and spirit that bonds all Royal Marines is second to none, which is why we are both keen to mark the anniversary."

The pair hope their efforts will raise at least £1,000 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Donations can be made in support of the two Royal Marines' efforts online at www.virginmoneygiving.com/350RMChallenge

Marines row Atlantic

ROYAL MARINES embarked on HMS Somerset have successfully completed a challenge to row the distance equivalent to crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

The team of ten rowed 4,700 kilometres on a rowing machine secured to the ship's deck.

The charity event required 24 hours of continuous rowing for 17 days in all-weather conditions.

The team was made up of members of HMS Somerset's Royal Marine Boarding Team and a linguist, who wanted to raise money for two charities.

To date, they have raised over £1,000 each for Pancreatic Cancer UK and the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

Royal Marine Boarding Teams have a tradition in completing a fund raising challenge whilst embarked on Royal Navy ships during operations.

Mne Ryan Mitchell-Lay said: "We really didn't know how hard it was going to be when we thought of the idea, but it quickly became apparent that we were in for some tough times over the 17 days."

Mne Greg Wilson said: "It was a fitting challenge for two causes that are close to our hearts. The

Towering challenge to launch RM350

THE Royal Marines launched both the Corps' 350th anniversary celebrations and a charity fundraising campaign by abseiling down the iconic BT Tower in London.

Celebrities, including honorary Royal Marines Lt Col Bear Grylls, TV presenter Helen Skelton, former Lion and England rugby world cup star Ben Kay, former England rugby star Martin Bayfield and Olympian Mark Foster joined members of the Royal Marines in the exhilarating abseil.

The abseil, a nail-biting 148-metres from the 31st floor of the Tower, raised funds for Sport Relief and the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

Corporals Deano Maughan and Paul Hewson kick-started the abseil to the sound of the bugles from the Royal Marines Band Service.

They were swiftly followed by the celebrities, BT employees led by Chief Executive Gavin Patterson, and charity abseilers.

Speaking after the abseil, Cpl Deano Maughan said: "I am very lucky to have launched the Royal Marines' 350th anniversary celebrations, a significant event in the Royal Marines history."

Royal Marine Bandsman Lucy Chappell said: "It's definitely not your bog-standard Wednesday morning."

"It's brilliant to be part of the band and be involved in the 350 anniversary."

Cpl Paul Hewson added: "It was a privilege to take part in the launch and to help fundraise for both Sport Relief and the Royal Marine Commandos is a privilege."



● Marine Sam Magowan from Combat Recruitment Team also took part in the abseil

The event took place over two days after strong winds halted the abseilings on the first day.

The abseilers included the commander of Royal Marines, the Commandant General, Maj Gen Ed Davis, who said: "I'm delighted to be leading the Corps family contingent down the side of the iconic building."

Royal Marine Bandswoman Lucy Chappell said: "It's definitely not your bog-standard Wednesday morning."

"It's brilliant to be part of the band and be involved in the 350 anniversary."

"We obviously play a lot for the events involved but to take part in an event alongside the Royal Marine Commandos is a privilege."



● Royal Marines buglers herald the start of the BT Tower abseil



● Left, Maj Gen Ed Davis



● Right: TV presenter Helen Skelton

Fundraising sewn up

A FORMER Royal Marine has turned a hobby into a money-making venture in aid of charity.

Keith Talbot, 68, spends hours doing cross stitch – and auctions his work to raise funds for the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

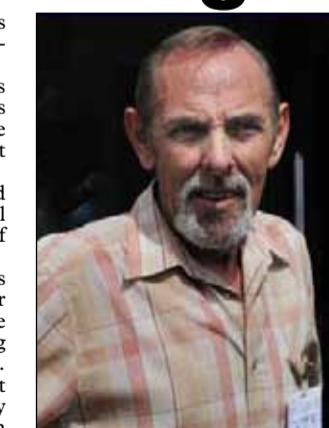
The father of two, who retired from the corps as a WO2 in April 1985, has raised hundreds of pounds from his hobby.

"I got interested in cross stitching when I worked for Bournemouth Council and one of the ladies was cross stitching during her lunch break," he said.

"It looked like something that I could do and the next day she brought me in a selection of threads, some material and a pattern. It didn't take me long to get hooked – and that was about 11 years ago."

Keith joined the Royal Marines in November 1961 as a 16-year-old junior Marine and passed out of training in May 1963 – he attended a 50th reunion last year.

The signals specialist served with 40, 41, 42, 43 and 45 Commando, as well as at RM Poole, headquarters of Commando Forces Signal Troop and took part in the Falklands



● Keith Talbot



● An example of Keith's work

conflict with 3 Commando.

"I've completed a few cross stitches for charity, the RMCTF being the beneficiary," said Keith, who has been married to Marlene for 47 years. The couple live in Poole, Dorset and have two children, Christopher and Kerry.

Keith has so far raised over £225 – plus more than £50 Gift Aid – with his latest work. To add to the donations visit www.justgiving.com/KeithTalbot.

cross stitch raised £300 for the RMCTF.

Earlier this year he completed a cross stitch of Marine Dowerstone, the statue at Bickleigh in Devon, home of 42 Commando. Each work takes more than 100 hours.

Keith has so far raised over £225 – plus more than £50 Gift Aid – with his latest work. To add to the donations visit www.justgiving.com/KeithTalbot.

Follow the Royal Marines during their anniversary year at www.Royalnavy.mod.uk/RM350



● A Royal Navy Sea King Mk4 from 845 NAS at the refuelling point at the Royal Norwegian Air Force base Bardufoss, Norway. In the background waits an RAF Mk3 Merlin

Pictures: POA(Phot) Mez Merrill

LONG LIVE THE KING

Iconic aircraft refuse to fall for Merlin's magic

IT HAS served with distinction for more than 30 years – and is putting up a battle against its younger replacement.

The veteran Sea King Mk4 is to be retired from service in 2016 but has proved as reliable as ever at this year's Commando Helicopter Force's Arctic training in northern Norway.

Sea Kings decamped from RNAS Yeovilton to Bardufoss for Exercise Clockwork, testing the ability of men, women and machines to live, fly and fight in the harshest of environments.

Joining the venerable Sea Kings, not for the first time, were RAF Merlin Mk3s which will be converted ready for front-line operations with CHF in the autumn this year.

"We've had no major issues with the Sea Kings. We had more maintenance issues last year, such as gearbox changes. This year has been about more scheduled maintenance," said AET Adam Heyler, 25, one of 30 engineers at Clockwork.

CPO Richard Munday, 40, added: "The Sea Kings have been really good, fantastic."

Air training officer at Clockwork Lt Cdr Andrew

Clarke marked his ninth year at the base – and he also intends to return in 2015.

"Norway is a challenging environment. You have to be aware of the changing weather but it's the white-out conditions on landing we are looking for. It does appear to be milder this year – we need fresh snow and that's been a challenge."

"It's good fun up here and for the students it's challenging as it takes them out of their comfort zone."

"I've got one of the best jobs in CHF. Flying is great, instructing is great. It's nice to do applied exercises, it's much more fun."

Lt Cdr Clarke, who began flying Sea Kings in 1987, will retire in May 2016, two months after the Sea King bows out.

"It's getting harder and harder to maintain Sea Kings; spares are harder to get and engineers are being sucked into Merlin."

"The Sea King is more of a pilot's aircraft – you are more aware of what's going on."

"It's funny as you see the newer stuff coming along that you realise the old stuff's all right. Sea Kings are nice to fly. They've got me out of a few tricky situations. It's completely versatile and it performs better



● An engineer from 845 NAS at work on a Royal Navy Sea King Mk4 helicopter during a snow storm at the Joint Helicopter Command base Clockwork in northern Norway

up here because it's cold.

"I will be one of the last to fly the Sea King. You get emotionally attached but it's just a machine at the end of the day."

Also hoping to be one of the last to fly the Sea Kings is Lt

Dominic Savage of 845 NAS.

"You feel like you are flying a piece of British heritage," said the 25-year-old.

After five years' training, Lt Savage was in the last group of pilots instructed on the Sea

King and was given his Wings in December last year.

"It is a good craft," he said. "It is old but it gets the job done. It is a pilot's aircraft and I know there are some who no longer fly it who wish they still were."

"It is designed as a pilot's aircraft and is not just a big computer screen like the Merlin."

"I have not had a flight in the Merlin yet and I only stepped foot in one for the first time three days ago. It is so much bigger and is a step up from the Sea King. It has more lift capacity and better endurance and you can see why we are replacing it. But it will be sad saying goodbye to the Sea King."

"It is such an historic and iconic bit of kit. The Merlin is very modern but I think some pilots like a bit of old-school nostalgia."

Lt Savage said he expected to be put through the training to fly the Merlin once it came to Yeovilton but will fly the Sea King until it is put out of service.

"It took me five years to get my Wings and I have been in the front-line for just three months. I am looking forward to seeing the Sea King out of service and moving to the Merlin and continue flying with CHF."

"That is the one thing I have always wanted to do."

He admitted the Arctic conditions at Clockwork presented their own challenges.

Continued on page 22



An aerial view of Clockwork



CHF Chefs serving evening meal in the galley at Clockwork



LPTI Paul Middleton in the ski store

He said: "It is extremely different but much more enjoyable and you have got to think a lot more about the limitations of the aircraft."

"It can get to -30°C and that can affect its performance and there are a lot more external things you need to think about to keep it flying. The biggest problem can come through white-outs and recirculation of snow when you hit the ground."

"But the training for that is the same as if you were having a sand out in the desert. You need good communication and a clear reference."

"I did a mountain detachment in Germany but it was in benign conditions. Here you do have to take a survival kit as the conditions are very harsh and it can be very challenging. You do learn a lot about training in a cold weather environment."

"When you are doing low-level flying through the fjords at night the white snow reflections can make it seem almost like daytime."

"Night flying definitely ups your workload as you only have peripheral vision with the night goggles but it is all usual training."

Royal Navy and Royal Marines air and ground crew have been working and training side-by-side with their RAF counterparts on the green Merlin from RAF Benson.

The Ministry of Defence is spending £300m converting the RAF's green Mk3 Merlins for CHF.

To convert them for Fleet Air

Arm purposes, the 25 helicopters will receive new glass cockpits and avionics, a folding main rotorhead and tail, and improved undercarriage.

The aircraft are due to be formally transferred to the Fleet Air Arm this autumn and will move to CHF's home at RNAS Yeovilton.

Speaking up for the Merlin is Flt Lt Chris Carrington-Smith, 28, of 78 Squadron RAF Benson.

"The Merlin's really nice to fly, it's a pilot's aircraft. All the information is handed to you and it's smooth to fly troops around."

"It's good to work the Royal Navy and their pilots have asked what the Merlin's like to fly."

"Navy pilots can look forward to a pilot's-thinking aircraft. They'll enjoy it, it'll be a good replacement to the Jungle. It does have different challenges, particularly with the new technology."

Norway is amazing, the training is phenomenal. Snow landings are different but it's great to learn new skills.

Clockwork is a great set up, we have been Afghanistan-focussed for ten years and now we need to broaden our horizons."

CO of Clockwork, Lt Cdr Mike Day, who is the warfare officer at 845 NAS, said flying the Sea King and Merlin together on this trip was a symbolic and historic event.

"All has gone well with no issues

at all," he added. "It's an excellent venue. We get exclusive training. You do have to be on top of your game, it's a harsh environment. We get excellent support from the Norwegians."

"It's very much a work hard, play hard ethos here."

Based at a dedicated site on the Royal Norwegian Air Force base at Bardufoss, almost 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle, Clockwork is as valid a training exercise in 2014 as it has ever been, because the one great, constant enemy of the military is the environment.

If you can survive and fight here, where the temperature plunges more than -30 degrees Celsius below zero, then you can survive and fight anywhere.

Temperatures have been relatively mild, dropping no lower than seven or eight degrees below zero, though that is not necessarily a good thing.

Anything closer to zero means damp snow, and cold and wet is a very unpleasant combination for both personnel and helicopters.

The main thrust of the training is to ensure the Junglies – the squadrons which carry Royal Marines into battle and support their campaign – can do just that.

In order to take part in Clockwork, all personnel (whether part of the CHF, itself a component of the tri-Services Joint Helicopter Command,

or of the Clockwork 'enabling team') have to pass the Cold Weather Survival Course, which includes at least one night out in a snowhole or shelter and the ice-breaking drills, where each individual jumps into a hole cut into the ice of a lake, pushes out their packed bergen and then hauls themselves out using ski poles.

"It was -26 when we did our ice-breaker drills," recalls Sea King pilot Capt James Bowerman, 29.

Suitably trained to survive in the bitter cold, personnel on the squadrons then learn, or remind themselves, how to work in conditions where the skin of your hand will stick to bare metal as if held by superglue and where the weather can ruin a flying sortie in minutes.

Bardufoss lies at the heart of a number of military ranges, allowing a wide variety of training exercises for air crew, and its position in the heart of a group of mountains means the tricky task of judging cloud, weather, winds, turbulence and visibility while carrying out a military mission can be practised close to the base.

Landing a helicopter in cold, deep snow produces a disorientating 'white-out', requiring a procedure that must be practised time and time again, as experience is the pilot's greatest ally (apart from an astute aircrewman leaning out of the door

and helping guide the aircraft down).

If a pilot is a dab hand at landing his or her machine here, then the similar 'brown-outs' of Afghanistan can also be approached with confidence.

Unfortunately this year, although the temperatures did drop, it wasn't cold enough or snowed enough, therefore the recirculation element has proved difficult.

Engineers work in awful conditions, learning how long it takes to do the simplest tasks when you factor in the cold and the amount of protective clothing worn.

Sea King engineer AET Heyler explained: "The problem with the cold is everything takes much longer as you can't touch the metal with your bare hands."

AET Taylor has been on Sea Kings since he joined up four-and-a-half years ago, has deployed to Afghanistan and took part in Operation Patwin in the Philippines.

"Norway and Afghanistan are very different but there are similarities – it's too cold to touch metal here and in Afghanistan it's too hot to touch the metal."

"One of my dad's best friends is a Sea King engineer and I was always interested in the military and he guided me to engineering. My dad works at Westlands as well," said AET Taylor, who will move on to work on Merlins in June.

CPO Munday, attached to CHF, added: "It's not as challenging as in

previous years. We're

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Paul Middleton.

This year he ha

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"It gets used co

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the gym so popul

The revamp

store, packed with

LONG LIVE THE KING





LH Cornelius 'Del' Delpesche in the main store at Clockwork



Commando Mobile Air Operations Team at load lifting training



CHF personnel conducting BV all-terrain vehicle training

ve achieved all our goals this year.

"It can be busy in here at weekends, not unusual for three hours of booking out equipment."

"My priority is to get the guys out as much as possible."

LPT Middleton, 33, also organises sporting and recreational trips, including skiing, ice fishing and dog sledging.

"The main thing for me is running my own gym, the skiing side of things in a beautiful part of the world."

"I've been in the Navy for 16 years and this is by far the best part."

"Fitness is massively important, for courage, discipline and morale, it can't all be work."

"Hopefully I've left a strong legacy to whoever takes over from me here."

Personnel also get the opportunity to add to their driving skills with Land Rovers on the skidpan or BV all-terrain vehicles in the snow.

Instructor LA(AH) Alex Pritchard, 30, from St Helens, who served his third year at Clockwork, this year, said: "The driving is a kind of secondary job but because I was out here I got involved. I absolutely love doing this."

"More people do the Land Rover driving on the skid pan than the BV as you have to do a course before you come out here."

Drafts to Clockwork – which has been going since the 1960s, with one

year off for the first Gulf War – are sought after, despite the cold, admits LS(SC) Tracey Smith.

"I've been trying to get out here for years. When I got here I was like a kid in a candy shop. It's a cracking draft to get. The scenery out here is gob-smacking."

LS(SC) Smith, 39, from Dorset, added: "It's been a quiet year for us to be honest. The biggest challenge has been getting the kit out here and back."

"I'm so glad I work on Sea Kings, they work so hard and the guys on the squadron keep things ticking over."

LS(SC) Smith joined up 17 years ago after her brother, Lt Gary Smith.

"He was having such a good time I decided to join. It's the best decision I ever made."

Unlike debutante LS(SC) Smith, LA(AH) Roberta 'Bob' Powell was on her third Clockwork.

"This year it's been more about the training as we haven't had a FOBEX (Forward Operating Base Exercise) or enough snow," said Bob, 37, from Northern Ireland.

"It's a Junglie world and male-oriented but we feel privileged to be here."

"My dad's an ex-Marine and he never got here so I've got one over on him."

Clockwork is not just about the flying. There's a huge team working

behind the scenes.

"When it goes smoothly no-one notices, it's when something goes wrong, particularly where food is concerned as it's such an emotive subject out here, that people notice us," said supply officer Lt Joshua Skelding, who was crash-drafted at ten days' notice from Faslane to Bardufoss.

"It's not just about supplies, it's also vehicles, catering for 250 people as well as clerical and legal advice."

Lt Skelding, 25, from Stourbridge, who works closely with the chefs, stewards and stores, added: "We are looking after people's welfare, the emotive topic of food, pay, medical services etc – it provides a lot of different challenges."

One of the biggest challenges is food, admits PO Pat Garrett, who leads a team of eight chefs and four stewards.

His team get through between five and ten 25kg bags of potatoes – and considerably more bags of vegetables – every week.

"We prepare up to 740 meals a day, and around 3,600 meals a week – plus late-night snacks for the pilots if night flying takes place."

The chefs work to a six-week menu cycle, with three choices of hot meals at both lunch and dinner.

"We're the only ones inspected three times a day, seven days a week," said PO Garrett, serving his third and final winter at Clockwork.

"Chefs get the chance to be a bit more creative up here. It's hard to take someone off a ship and bring them here but all my lads here can go on to work in a ship."

"I like traditional stuff – cheesy, hammy, eggy. Steak night on a Saturday is the most popular meal of the week."

"Healthy eating is a big thing and we do achieve it to a degree but they like the traditional stuff."

A lorry-load of food arrives once a month, which is then topped up with fresh fruit and veg.

"Our fruit and veg is local but it's really expensive."

"I dished out bananas one day and they were more expensive than the steak."

Chef AB Jason 'Alfie' Hitchcock, 22, from Somerset, served his second year at Clockwork this year.

"It's all about getting scran out on time and making sure everyone's happy."

"We do get compliments which is nice. Spag bol is my favourite dish."

LW Gemma Hunt, 23 from Nottingham, was the only woman to spend all winter at Clockwork.

"It's a good deployment – the snow's pretty and we've been skiing. I'm quite busy but the boss tries to

get us to go out.

"I did get to Tromsø on a city trip but the best bit was a helo trip in the mountains in a Sea King."

"The cold weather course was a challenge, particularly the ice-breaking. Looking back now I'm so happy I did it."

"I love my job because I can travel. The paperwork and admin can get a bit dull but I've got a nice office."

The personnel were also visited by RNAS Yeovilton Chaplain Janice Honey Morgan, making her first visit to Clockwork.

"It's a really nice atmosphere, a happy team," she said.

"I didn't realise how old Clockwork is. It's efficiently run, welcoming – all good Christian values. I feel very privileged to be here."

"I believe a chaplain's role is to change the day. Even if I annoy them I have changed their day!"

During her visit, along with secretary of the Junglie Association Tina Cullen, the Rev Honey Morgan led a memorial service for former vice chairman Robin 'Vince' Price, who died in February at the age of 55.

This year's Clockwork deployment concluded at the end of March, but it won't be long before planning begins for next year's exercise.

Lt Cdr Day's vision for next year includes Merlin, Wildcat, Chinook and Apache helicopters – and, of course, the Sea King.



● A Royal Navy Sea King Mk4 helicopter from 845 Naval Air Squadron landing at the Royal Norwegian Air Force base Bardufoss in northern Norway during a heavy snow shower

Pictures: POA(Phot) Mez Merrill

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUES

DEWHEARTHERE!

THERE IS A MISS VAN DER LUSH
AT THE FORD BROW WHO WOULD
LIKE TO TAKE A YOUNG HANDSOME
BRITISH SAILOR TO....



Anger as I drank PO tot

I WAS a junior seaman onboard HMS Aisne, my first ship after training.

One day I was detailed off to help the canteen manager.

There were four of us. Hands to dinner was piped and the other three disappeared.

The manager asked me to stay as he didn't want to leave the stores.

I helped him get all his stores down.

He said: "Come with me lad, you can have sippers."

I had no idea what that meant. I waited outside the PO's mess.

He came out carrying a tot. I took the tot and drank it. He went mad, started shouting at me.

A PO came out and took me away to explain what 'sipper' was.

I have never forgotten it – nor did the canteen manager.

Trevor Bloom
King's Lynn

I'll never forget tears

AFTER reading about Monitor HMS 33 and the conflict in Gallipoli, it brought back memories of when I was 16 years old in 1951 and a Sea Cadet in the Cardiff unit.

We were asked if we would play the *Last Post* on the bugle to commemorate the landings.

Afterwards an elderly gentleman came to me and thanked me and I could see he was crying.

I will never forget those tears
L Jensen
Holland

Great times

THANK YOU for the article in February's *Navy News* concerning HMS Daring's visit to Jakarta, Indonesia.

It brought back many memories of landing at Tandjung Priok with Naval Party 2481, from HMS LST 3001 in October 1945.

Can't say I remember any dancing girls though!

Keith Robinson
Berkshire



LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.

Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*, nor can we reply to every one.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

First of new rates

I WAS among the first 400 promotions to Fleet Chief in July 1972.

The rate was introduced to still grumbling in the Fleet that for Senior Chiefs there was no way to distinguish an experienced old and bold from a much younger and newly-promoted chief (apart from the haggard look!) as the uniform was identical apart from the LSGC (if earned).

My Lords decided in their wisdom to base the new rate on the US system of Fleet Chief, instead of bringing back the prestigious title of Warrant Officer, which would have been instantly recognisable to equivalents in the Army, RAF and civilians linked to the Services.

Some of us at the time believed,

rightly or wrongly, that this decision was taken to avoid the impression that we had been promoted into the officer corps, but of course not Dartmouth trained.

Eventually, of course, the system was changed, but the introduction of the WO2 rate, to sweeten those many chiefs who were not selected, only led to not enough required posts at that level in a constantly-shrinking Navy – hence its intended demise.

I still have my certificate appointing me as a Warrant Officer direct from Lord Carrington, acting in the Queen's name – no mention in that document of a Fleet Chief rate!

A shambles, really.
ex-FCCEA D R Thorne
Titchfield, Hampshire



● LA(Phot) James Crawford and his daughter Lily, 3, wave off HMS Portland. Lily's plastic Union Flag is upside down

Soldier made up for missing rum ration



● Tony Smith received this present of Pusser's Rum last year

Retribution for bike

IN 1968 I was on the MTC course in HMS Sultan billeted at Fort Grange.

I bought a bike which I used to get to the main dining halls and my tot of rum.

Training alongside us were members of the Libyan navy. My bike went missing on several occasions. One day it was missing again and I saw a rating from the Libyan navy on my bike.

I tried to have him charged – unsuccessfully.

Fast forward to 1986 when I was landlord of a pub and the

Americans were based at Upper Heyford for the Iraq war.

Whilst sitting at the bar I retold the story and a letter was composed to the CO of USAF Upper Heyford. The gist of which is that I have waited years for the miscreant to be punished.

Much to my surprise I received a reply. This was followed by another letter from Mike Fogg of Pusser's Rum UK commiserating with me about the loss of my bike – but no rum was forthcoming.

Mike Scales
Kentisbeare, Devon



Front-page memories

AFTER seeing your January front page, I thought you would be interested in a photo of my husband Geoffrey in similar uniform with his Defender cap badge.

This was taken at Chatham Dockyard in January 1965.

We both smiled on seeing January's *Navy News* and had to search for the same photo.

Mrs R Wallace

Services unite to save lives

I WOULD just like to say that *Navy News* did very well in producing a supplement marking 60 years of Royal Navy search and rescue 1953-2013.

I gave a talk on the RNLI in Edinburgh and one of the lifeboat crew members – Nigel Millard – has a book out, called

German PC hat for my RAF cap

JUST a note to say thank you for publishing the Tom Fogg/Gilbert January reunion article – it's always good to see it in print.

Further to that reunion, part of the news video clip taken by ABC News was filmed on HMAS Vampire, which was a Daring-class destroyer.

Interesting because your February 2014 prize puzzle competition, depicts another Daring-class destroyer HMS Diana, originally to be named HMS Druid.

I looked it up because I had seen HMAS Vampire in Sydney harbour and recognised its silhouette!

Not bad for an ex "Crabfat", eh?

During my service career in the RAF I had some sea time aboard HMS Antelope, whilst serving at RAF Hereford, so have dual interests as a retiree Naval and Air, especially so for HMS Antelope as it has my RAF SD cap aboard in the PO's Mess.

I still have the exchange hat given by the PO's Mess president, a German policeman's cap showing signs of heavy wear and tear since November 1981 when I acquired it.

I will give the copy of *Navy News* to Tom, as a memento of his 15 minutes of fame, when I next visit him in Birkenhead.

He will dine out on that Australian experience for some time, especially as he also met up with an old shipmate from HMS Tenacious, Norman Whinnett, who was the duty Bosun at the time of the ditching recovery.

Bas Hanrahan
Trowbridge

Druid became Diana

YOUR mystery picture (228) of HMS Diana reminds me her intended name before her launch was Druid.

I was serving in her in 1956 during the atom bomb tests and the Suez crisis. The tests were in April, May and June 1956 at the Monte Bello Islands.

In July we were told to join the Med fleet. On arrival at Aden the Suez Crisis broke out and we were told to hold station until further notice.

The Diana was ordered to patrol the Red Sea, meeting up occasionally with HMS Newfoundland.

As you quite rightly say, an Egyptian frigate (the Domiat) was sunk by us with a little help from the Newfoundland.

The Domiat was originally HMS Nish.

S Jenkinson
Conwy, Wales

Royal Marines seek medal recognition

I AM currently a L/Cpl in the Royal Marines and am writing to you on behalf of myself and some of my colleagues.

In 2011 I was part of FCT (Fleet Contingent Troop). In August of that year we embarked RFA Fort Victoria and deployed on Op Capri 2.

We were out for little over four months and accomplished a great deal. The Commander of the UK Counter-Piracy Group at the time was Capt Gerry Northwood.

During the operation 43 hostages were rescued and 36 Somalis were detained and handed over to the authorities. Seven of these suspects were later sent to the Seychelles for trial.

On May 28 2012 I appeared in court along with the then troop commander Capt Yapp, Capt Northwood and various other service personnel deployed on RFA Fort Victoria at the time of their capture. After a long trial, all seven were convicted and given varying jail sentences. This was a very significant case as it was the first successful conviction of having 'intent' to commit piracy.

The reason I am bringing this up is that myself, and my troop, were all awarded a NATO Africa medal for our efforts. However it has not been approved to be



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest triple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is L/Cpl Arron Welch

worn on any of our uniforms.

I've had several different explanations, including that it was not a war and nobody has been killed on counter-piracy operations.

Yes, it's true but many people certainly had their lives saved.

The criterion the MOD tests Operational Service medal awards against is 'risk and rigour.'

I understand this leaves a lot open to debate but I genuinely believe that boarding a dhow harbouring pirates who have



● Royal Marines embarked RFA Fort Victoria for Op Capri 2

been seen with weapons and have refused to stop even after warning shots have been fired at them, at 20 knots, from a 22ft rib, in a high-sea state, constitutes risk.

And I think that the searching and detaining of the pirates afterwards, definitely meets the rigour criteria.

The reason the boardings that took place during the period of Op Capri 2 went so smoothly was because of the overwhelming display of force and professionalism produced by the men boarding the vessels.

In my opinion that is why nobody was killed.

This is just an account of my experiences. Many more counter-piracy operations have taken place, and each of the men and women involved have their own thoughts and experiences.

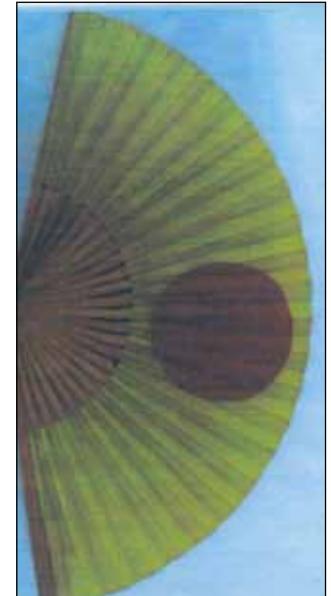
Therefore I'd like to highlight that this case does not just concern me and my group of 30, but a large number of Service personnel who have worked to protect innocent people and the world's economy from piracy.

At a time when morale in the Forces is low and with even more cuts to come, it feels that this is just another instance of the efforts of our Forces being overlooked and underappreciated.

L/Cpl Arron Welch
Dorset

Editor's footnote: After speaking to a medal expert, we were told as a general principle where UK personnel receive medals from International Organisations such as the UN, NATO or the EU, the Sovereign's permission to wear it would only be considered where, had it been a wholly UK operation, it compares in terms of both risk and rigour that might warrant the institution of a British medal.

That the NATO Africa medal and the comparable EU Operation Atalanta medal have not been approved for wear does not detract from the importance of these operations or the high regard in which those delivering the internationally-admired UK contribution are held.



Not lost in translation

IT HAS taken my 66 years to find someone to translate the words on this Japanese fan

It is a patriotic march and part of it reads:

Look at the sun in the east.

You can feel the spirit in the heaven directly.

If the sun shines high in the sky.

We are filled with hope on the ocean.....

Also, regarding the letter from W Rines of Somerset in December's issue. HMS Euryalus was not in Sydney for 1945-46 new year as we spent Christmas and new year in Hong Kong.

Mr K J Taylor
Broadstairs, Kent

Book immortalises ship's cat and dog

THE photos of Leslie the cat and Shrapnel the dog in February's *Navy News* reminded me that these pets were immortalised in Joy Packer's book *Grey Mistress* about her husband Admiral Sir Herbert Packer, who commanded HMS Manchester from 1940-41.

While Manchester was being built on Tyneside in 1938, two young cats had joined her and were named after Hawthorne & Leslie, the builders of the ship.

The former, a male, jumped ship before she left the Tyne and the latter duly bore his kittens in Manchester's boiler room. Subsequent litters were sired in places as far apart as Colombo in Ceylon and Molde in Norway.

Shrapnel had apparently pulled a milk cart in Dunkirk before his June 1940 evacuation in HMS Jaguar. Manchester came alongside her after she was bombed and Shrapnel lost no time in jumping across to a larger and safer ship.

George Adams
Co Down

Leave uniform alone

I'M glad some sailors responded to Mr Doug Barlow's misplaced comments about getting rid of lanyards on the AB uniform.

My father served in the Royal Navy for nine years from 1936 and looked very smart in his fore and aft rig.

Lanyards and collars etc are kept for traditional and historical reasons which involve pride in Servicemen.

Too many busybodies have mucked about with the uniform already. I wish they had kept bell bottoms and pattern 08 gaiters as they were very distinctive and smart.

Sailors in Portsmouth tend to look like security guards these days when they go ashore in berets and parkas.

Edward Dickens
Isle of Wight RNA

Address rang bells

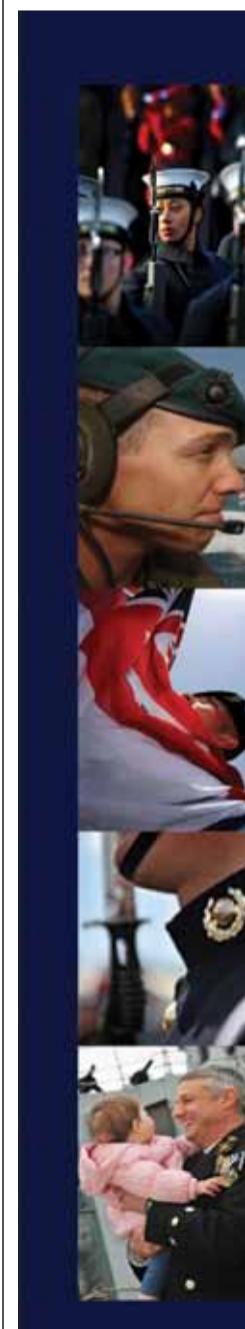
THE new address for *Navy News*, Leach Building, rang a bell with me.

It was on September 2 1995 when I attended the 50th anniversary of VJ Day, along with over 4,500 Navy veterans.

We met the Admiral of the Fleet (rtd) Sir Henry Leach, on Southsea Common where we all had a tot of rum.

I have still got the small glass which is on display in a cabinet.

Donald MacArthur
Southsea



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Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building,
HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

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Editor: Mike Gray 023 9262 5257 or Mil: 93832 5257

Editorial

News editor:

Richard Hargreaves

023 9262 5255

Production Editor:

Lorraine Proudflock

023 9262 5282

edit@navynews.co.uk

General enquiries and archives:

023 9262 3553/5847

Fax: 023 9273 4484

Somerset pair mark 25 years

TWO Devonport-based sailors serving in HMS Somerset who joined the Royal Navy on the same day have reached their 25 years of service milestone whilst on deployment in the Middle East.

Lt Mark 'Tug' Wilson, Deputy Logistics Officer, and PO Alan 'Jonah' Jones, Above Water Warfare Director, sailed from Plymouth in January for a six-month deployment to the Gulf.

The men had boarded trains in their respective home towns of Northampton and Durham to start their basic training as 'Nozzers', or new entry sailors, at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall on February 19 1989.

PO Jones said: "It was only recently, when Tug noticed my service number on my identity card, that we realised we had actually joined up the same day."

He started his career as a Junior Able Seaman, starting in Type 22 frigates.

Lt Wilson started as an Assistant Cook at Raleigh, and went on to serve in a variety of ships.

He achieved the rank of CPO before receiving his commission in January 2007.

Tug said: "The past 25 years have flown past. I can still remember wearing my Garfield T-shirt and ripped blue jeans as I received the standard haircut at HMS Raleigh.

"Since then, the Royal Navy has provided some wonderful experiences and I have seen many countries around the world."

Cdr Mike Smith, HMS Somerset's CO, said: "25 years of service is an important milestone and both men should be rightly proud of their achievement.

"Both members of my team are an example of just how far you can progress in the Royal Navy and how diverse a career can be had in the Senior Service."

Day in the life of RN's chief

A BUSINESS breakfast, high-powered meetings, fire-fighting and damage-control training.

All normal fare for Britain's most senior sailor, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas.

Not-so-normal fare for 26-year-old Hayley Barnden, from Chippenham, who shadowed the admiral for a day as part of National Apprentice Week.

The day with Admiral Zambellas, on a visit to the Portsmouth area, was one reward for being one of the MOD's top apprentices.

Hayley completed a three-year apprenticeship earning the Sir David Cardwell Memorial Prize, presented to the apprentice who has done most to overcome challenges to complete her education.

Apprenticeship complete, Hayley now works at MOD Abbey Wood as Platform Safety Officer for Royal Navy submarines, authorising new equipment and changes to existing kit.

Her big day began by joining the First Sea Lord for a business breakfast (porridge and poached eggs) with Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel.

After that it was a short trip to Whale Island to visit Phoenix, home of firefighting training and the Damage Repair Instructional Unit to see how sailors shore up flooding compartments.

Then it was on to Navy Command HQ in Leach Building to observe meetings.

"It's been really good fun and also really interesting," said Hayley.

"What's really surprised me is how quickly decisions are made – so much faster than at my level."

Fledgling aviators pass course



● Former RN pilot Mike Thornton with his son Lt William Thornton

STUDENTS of 702 Naval Air Squadron saw the conclusion of three years' hard work come to fruition as they celebrated the award of their Wings at RN Air Station Yeovilton.

702 NAS welcomed Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral Ben Key to award Wings and end-of-course certificates and trophies to the students and aircrew of Lynx Course 1/13.

For one student, Lt William Thornton, it was a particularly special moment as his father Mike was there to recognise William's achievement.

As a Royal Navy pilot Mike flew Wasps and Lynx for 34 years, then had a career as a civilian chief pilot flying military aircraft for Fleetlands – from which he retired only weeks ago.

The students were with 702 NAS for over 12 months, and experienced a wide range of disciplines.

During the early part of the course, the student pilots and observers learnt how to fly the aircraft in all weathers, by day and night, and to work the Lynx's extensive sensors across a wide

variety of conditions.

During the second part of the course students were taught to operate and fight the aircraft, over land and sea, at home and in France – but always with a focus on the maritime.

Their first taste of operations at sea came in HMS Monmouth in late 2013, where the pilots honed their deck-landing skills, moving on to more complex scenarios during a spell on board aviation training ship RFA Argus.

Among those tasting success on the course or in the squadron were Lt Mark Finnie (observer), Lt Mark Hoar (pilot), Lt Matthew Leonard (pilot) and Sub Lt Thomas Wilson (observer) – Thomas was born and raised in Yeovil, with the sound and sight of helicopters flying overhead, and dreamed of being a Naval aviator.

A Long Service and Good Conduct Medal was presented to PO Hill, and Lt Max Cosby was awarded the Herbert Lott award for outstanding character and leadership through his first stage of naval flying training.



● Sisters Shannon (left) and Triona Brown on the flight deck of HMS Diamond

Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan

Sisters meet on sister ships

TWO sisters serving on Portsmouth-based warships HM Ships Diamond and Daring were briefly reunited on Diamond's flight deck in the Med for the first time in nearly ten months.

LET Shannon Brown, 23, last saw her sister LAC Triona Brown, 26, at home in April last year as Triona prepared for a nine-month global deployment on board Daring.

Diamond, in which Shannon is serving, then deployed in January this year and is currently providing support to a NATO-led coalition task force contributing to the maritime fight against terrorism.

With the two ships' deployments, the sisters faced the prospect of not seeing each other for 14 months.

Yet when an opportunity arose to reunite the pair, albeit briefly, as the sister ships passed each other in the night, I decided that this would be a perfect opportunity to arrange a reunion.

"Shannon had no idea that her sister, Triona, was going to be in HMS Daring's helicopter when it landed on my flight deck, so to see the two sisters together for the only time in 14 months really was worth every effort."

Shannon was summoned to attend the flight deck in the early morning with the excuse that she had to collect some cargo. She had no idea that the 'cargo' was actually her sister.

"I didn't expect to see her jump out of the back of the helicopter," said Shannon.

"I popped home to see Triona in April last year but it was very hectic as she prepared for her own deployment, so we didn't actually have much time together. When she sailed on HMS Daring, I was at sea on HMS Diamond so I wasn't even able to wave her off."

Double happy

A NEWLY-qualified Air Engineering Officer picked up a trophy as well as his Certificate of Competency at the end of an arduous training course.

Lt Ross Clegg, now one of the AEOs on 829 Naval Air Squadron working with Merlin Mk2, was awarded the John Phesse Memorial Trophy for best student.

Lt Clegg was one of ten officers – seven civilian trainees who were later joined by three senior rates who had opted to become officers – who received their certificates at Culdrose from Cdre Malcolm Toy, Senior Air Engineer in the RN and Head of Regulation and Certification at the Military Aviation Authority.

Presentations were also made to AET Christian Wild (Trainee of the Year) and LAETs of the Year Steven Reeves and Matthew Jones.

Marines win award for rescuing pony



● From left: Mns David Willers and Chris Mahomet, Cpl Chris Westbury and Mne Henry Mitchell

hours to complete, and provided a stern test for the five green berets in terms of handling their craft in difficult conditions and landing and recovering a number of civilians – to say nothing of a dozing pony.

The Bronze Gallantry award, for considerable displays of courage, skill and tenacity in the rescue of an animal, was presented to Cpl Chris Westbury and Marines Henry Mitchell, David Willers, Steven McNicholas and Chris Mahomet.

Col Garth Manger, CO of 1 Assault Group RM, said: "I am really very pleased that they are

being recognised by the RSPCA for their part in the rescue last year.

"It shows the versatility we pride ourselves on in the Royal Marines that these men can help out in the local community one day rescuing animals, and the next day be supporting the Royal Navy and defence around the globe."

Mne McNicholas said: "That afternoon I was tasked as a coxswain in what is usually a straightforward normal exercise.

"On arrival at work I learnt the exercise was cancelled, but a random phone call had come in asking for our help and assistance

just outside Plymouth Sound, past Penlee Point.

"At this point we had little information about what was occurring – just 'grab your stuff lads, someone needs a hand rescuing a pony'."

He added: "They say you never know what to expect in the Corps, and every day can be different – this statement was certainly true that day.

"I think I can speak for everyone in saying that no matter what situation we can help in, we will always ensure we are there to offer our service and adapt to anything thrown at us."

An MBE for ex-RN's Q...

FORMER Royal Navy boxing champion and head coach Q Shillingford has received his MBE from the Queen during a ceremony at Windsor Castle.

Q, 46, who now coaches at the Heart of Portsmouth Boxing Academy and is an England Boxing qualified coach, was recognised for services to boxing and young people in the New Year Honours list.

The former POPT started boxing at the age of ten and by 14 was national schoolboy champion – a title he held for three years before moving on to the senior categories.

He joined the Navy with 90 bouts behind him and won the senior RN title within months of

signing up in 1985.

Five-times RN champion at lightweight or welterweight, Q also took the Combined Services title three times and rose to number four in the British rankings before retiring from the ring at the age of 22.

Q's period as Royal Navy head coach was marked by ambitious objectives (under his tutelage the RN became the second most successful club in England), boundless enthusiasm – and a dazzling array of nicknames for his top fighters, including 'Mad Max', 'the Hurricane', 'the Irish Hammer', 'H Bomb', 'TNT', 'the Thin Destroyer' and 'the Baby-Face Assassin'...

Middleton diver takes inaugural safety trophy

A SAILOR from HMS Middleton was the inaugural winner of the Diving Safety Excellence Trophy

Cdr Chris Baldwin, the Ministry of Defence Superintendent of Diving (SofD) presented the award, for 2013, to LS(D) Andrew Groves, Leading Diver on board Middleton (MCM2 Crew 4).

LD Groves was cited as having made an exceptional effort to ensure that the diving safety management system onboard his minehunter was in excellent condition.

This included the maintenance of all the diving equipment, control of documentation,

team competency and diving currency, and sustainability of diving operational capability.

As an LD for one of the four minehunters deployed in the Gulf, this was no mean feat – and the ship achieved the highest Diving Safety Management System Audit score in 2013.

While LD Groves was at pains to stress that this was a team effort, Diving Standards Officer (Navy) Lt Cdr 'Soapy' Watson was in no doubt that it was LD Groves' extraordinary individual effort around which the team's success was based.

The aim of the award is to raise diving

safety awareness and standards among the MOD diving community and to reward the efforts of individuals in ensuring that this hazardous duty is conducted as safely as the MOD diving environment allows.

SofD inspectors, who monitor safety standards in military, commercial and recreational (Adventurous Training and Cadet Forces) fields, can issue Diving Safety Commendations on behalf of SofD, to outstanding individuals.

Certificate winners are then considered by a panel and one person is given the overall Diving Safety Award, sponsored by DIVEX.

Duke-class award for Lee

A SAILOR from Gosport has been commended for his work on HMS Richmond as the ship prepared to return to operational duty.

Sub Lt Lee Duke was assigned to the Type 23 frigate in the rank of CPO in charge of the ship systems.

Described as a 'most capable engineer', he was selected to receive a Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla commendation in recognition of his results in maintenance, repair, training and personnel management.

During Sub Lt Duke's time on board, Richmond had just emerged from a £20 million upgrade and was undergoing a busy period of trials and training in preparation for her next tasking.

The 33-year-old was selected for promotion to the Officer Corps last July and is currently undergoing training at Dartmouth.

Cdre The Honourable Michael Cochrane, Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla, presented Sub Lt Duke with his commendation and prize during a visit to Dartmouth.

Cdre Cochrane said: "I had 37 extremely talented people in contention for this prize."

"Sub Lt Duke stood out from the crowd due to his high commitment, attention to detail and team spirit."

"He has a bright future ahead of him and I have no doubt he will continue to be an asset to the Service."

Sub Lt Duke said: "I feel very proud and delighted to be awarded the commendation."

"I am very grateful for this recognition of my hard work and efforts and I would like to thank all those who supported me during my time aboard HMS Richmond."

Risk management prize for RN officer

A ROYAL Navy officer has won a prestigious business award for his work with the Navy Command Resources and Plans Performance Management Team.

Lt Barry McNally, Navy Command Portfolio Policy and Assurance Manager, won the Institute of Risk Management (IRM) Newcomer of the Year prize at the organisation's Global Risk Awards 2014.

Other winners and nominees represented blue-chip global companies such as Barclays, Emirates Airline and Hewlett-Packard.

The officer has also been congratulated by Sword Active Risk, which produces a risk management software package used by companies and organisations around the world – including Lt McNally.

A keen user of the Active Risk Manager package, Lt McNally impressed the IRM judging panel, which consisted of an international group of more than 30 leading risk management practitioners and academics.

The IRM is arguably the world's leading enterprise-wide risk education institute, and is an independent and well-respected advocate of the risk profession.

On winning the accolade, Lt McNally said: "I'm delighted

with the award, and would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has helped me during the last 12 to 18 months both within the MOD and amongst our partner organisations."

Keith Ricketts, Marketing Director at Sword Active Risk, said: "Everyone at Active Risk joins me in congratulating Barry on winning this prestigious award."

"As proactive risk management continues to grow in importance at forward-thinking organisations looking to exploit opportunities by understanding risk, these awards

certainly provide recognition for our best practitioners."

IRM Chief Executive Jeremy Harrison said: "These awards are without parallel in their global reach, calibre of entrants and rigorous judging process."

"The awards celebrate the full range of practical qualities required for risk management excellence in today's world."

Risk management is the identification, assessment, and prioritisation of risks to a business or organisation, and the subsequent actions to monitor, control and minimise such risks.

Risks come in many shapes and sizes – threats from project failures, legal liabilities, accidents and natural disasters, deliberate attacks or events that could be gathered under the general heading of Murphy's Law.

Modern business practice regards risk management not just as a defensive shield, but as a means of improving the organisation's processes, with such risks being laid off to other bodies, efforts made to mitigate the effect or acceptance of a certain level of risk, all of which informs the continuity plan.



US award for RNR officer

THE CABINET Office in London proved a memorable venue in which to present the new Head of the Royal Naval Reserve's Media Operations Specialisation (MOS) with a special award.

Lt Cdr Mark Hankey RNR (above) received the US Meritorious Service Medal for his work and dedication during a mobilisation to Afghanistan.

The Whitehall-based training day was Mark's first official duty as head of the MOS, having taken over the post from Lt Cdr Ian Pratt only a few days before.

Mark unexpectedly found himself the centre of attention when he was presented with his medal by Cdre Neil Brown, currently seconded to the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office.

Mark, a marketing professional in civilian life, was deployed to Afghanistan in 2013 as Deputy Chief of Public Affairs for NATO's ISAF Joint Command in Kabul.

Mark said: "My operational tour was a fascinating experience that tested the professional skills I have learnt in the Reserve Forces to the max."

"Being awarded the United States Meritorious Service Medal was a surprise and I was honoured to have been chosen for such recognition."

New trails to blaze for Kenny



A FIREFIGHTER from Dumbarton was looking to the future as he prepared to retire from his job at Clyde Naval Base after 26 years of service.

Kenny Richmond, 48, has worked at the base since January 1988, beginning as an escort with the security department before joining the newly-formed Defence Fire and Rescue Service in 1990.

Kenny (left) is a well-known face at Faslane, for the past two years undertaking fire risk assessments and conducting staff fire awareness training the length and breadth of the Naval Base.

But before that he served for 20 years as an operational crew manager, responding to incidents and leading firefighters on the ground.

"I have mixed emotions about leaving," said Kenny. "I've found the job rewarding and have worked with some good people over the years, but I'm looking forward to the challenges ahead too."

"Although I'm retiring from the Defence Fire Service I won't be resting on my laurels. I'd like to bring the skills I've gained over the years to a fresh job and will be looking for opportunities."

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Convoy tales recorded

THE Legasee Education Trust has won funding for a project which will record the personal stories of 50 Chatham ratings who served in wartime convoys.

Legasee has been awarded £62,900 by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the 'Keeping Britain Afloat' initiative, which will be undertaken alongside the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

The project will culminate in 2015 with a permanent exhibition at Chatham Historic Dockyard, which will mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War 2.

Working with Legasee, volunteers and young people will learn about the techniques of interviewing, filming, editing and transcribing as they capture and archive filmed oral history.

They will gain a deeper insight into the importance of the convoys in keeping Britain and its allies supplied with essential items, including food, during the war, and they will also learn how important sea trade still is to Britain's survival as a nation.

Commenting on the award, Legasee Trustee Martin Bisiker said: "We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and confident that finally this incredible story can be captured – that the key role convoy veterans from Kent played will be recognised, and that young people will be part of the process."

Alex Patterson, Collections and Galleries Manager for Dockyard Trust, said: "As the Historic Dockyard is home to HMS Cavalier, the last surviving World War 2 destroyer that served in the Arctic Convoys and now the National Destroyer Memorial, this project will preserve these stories for future generations."

The 68kg bell was collected

Battleship bell is donated to Clyde

AN emotional reunion took place at Clyde Naval Base when a ship's bell from World War 1 battleship HMS Valiant was returned to the Royal Navy – and, fittingly, a new home on the Valiant Jetty.

by amphibious assault ship HMS Albion, which visited New York four years ago, and delivered to Clyde Naval Base when Albion took part in the Joint Warrior exercises of September 2010.

It was then put into storage at Faslane until the Valiant Jetty – which will be used by the Royal Navy's fleet of attack submarines – formally came into service last year.

Although the bell shows signs of its age, it is structurally sound, and now takes pride of place in the Valiant Jetty support building, overlooked by the ship's impressive Battle Honours board.

And it was there that Patrick Dumas gave a moving speech at a ceremony where he formally handed the bell into the care of Cdre Keith Beckett, Clyde Naval Base Commander.

Mr Dumas said: "It is my family's and my hope that this bell will inspire the young sailors who go to sea from the Valiant Jetty to live up to the Royal Navy's matchless record of valour, steadfastness and professional skills.

"This ceremony really has meant a great deal to me."

Mr Dumas was joined by his wife, MaryAnne, plus distinguished guests in the support building for the short dedication ceremony, after which Cdre Beckett said: "It was an honour and a privilege to be able to accept one of the original dreadnought's ship's bells from Mr Dumas – and fitting, I think, for it to be displayed proudly at



● Patrick Dumas and Cdre Keith Beckett with the ship's bell from HMS Valiant

Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald

the head of the Valiant Jetty.

"On behalf of the Royal Navy, I would like to thank Mr Dumas and his family for this incredible act of kindness in restoring the bell to its original home."

HMS Valiant – the name has 17 Battle Honours to its credit – suffered no damage at Jutland but fired nearly 300 shells at

Ten minutes later another, more violent explosion occurred, possibly from a second torpedo, and within minutes Penelope had sunk with the loss of 417 lives; 206 men survived.

Seven decades on, members of the HMS Penelope Association, formed by some of those rescued, honoured the remaining seven known survivors, one of whom is Royal Marine Albert Martin, from Essex.

Now aged 92, Albert recalled he had been working in the cordite handling room under B Turret, which was locked during action stations – meaning there was no escape.

Just before that fatal day Albert had transferred to Landing Craft Assault duties, which probably saved his life.

In recognition of his service

a commemorative book of remembrance and a set of ship's cufflinks were presented to Albert,

while further presentations have been made to other survivors, including Stan Lake, Stan Cocking and George Measey.

the head of the Valiant Jetty.

She remained in commission (except for refits) until 1937

when she underwent a major rebuild at Devonport, which was not completed until the early months of the war.

She was involved in Operation Catapult, the destruction of the potentially-dangerous French Fleet at Mers-el-Kebir, but suffered damage in a floating dock accident in Trincomalee in

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River Plate memorial dedication

THE first of three major events organised by the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate takes place this month at the National Memorial Arboretum.

A memorial will be dedicated at the arboretum, at Alrewas in Staffordshire, at 11.30am on Saturday April 12.

The other events see members of the association travel to the town of Ajax, near Toronto in Canada – a community which took its name from the Royal Navy cruiser.

The highlight of the visit will be the presentation to the town of Cdre Henry Harwood's admiral's uniform, as well as talks by Jonathan Harwood, the Commodore's grandson.

The final event will be a lunch, to be held in Portsmouth on Saturday December 13.

For more details see www.hmsajax.org

Good show at branch AGM

WANSBECK branch in Northumberland saw a good turnout of members for its annual general meeting.

Following the completion of business the branch president, Cdr Chris Craddock, had the pleasant duty of presenting branch secretary S/M George Kirsopp with an engraved memento to thank him for 25 years of sterling service.

This was followed by a very enjoyable social occasion and a buffet – not forgetting the traditional tot of Pusser's rum.

Several members are planning to join shipmates from other branches of the RNA at the National Arboretum in June for the unveiling of the RNA Memorial, which will take place during Conference weekend.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (right) was HMS Diana, which was to be called Druid, and J Harris, of Rainham, wins our £50 prize for identifying her.

This month's ship (above) was launched at Northwich in early 1954 and was officially designated a seaward defence boat.

The following year she was renamed after a river, then reverted to her original name in 1965.

Displacing around 140 tons when loaded, this vessel left the Senior Service in 1993.

(1) What was her original name, and (2) what was her name between 1955 and 1965?

We have removed the pennant number from the image.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building,

MYSTERY PICTURE 230

Name
Address
.....
My answers: (1).....
(2).....

Battle of the Atlantic commemorated

LONDONDERRY branch will be holding their Battle of the Atlantic commemorations over the weekend of May 3-4.

Any shipmates who wish to attend – including the Saturday night dinner in the City Hotel in Londonderry – would be most welcome.

Numbers for the dinner are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first served basis,

so cheques for £30 should be forwarded to branch secretary S/M Frank Brown as soon as possible – contact him on 028 7129 1795 for further details.

The programme for the weekend sees commemorations for HMS Laurentic in Co Donegal on the afternoon of Saturday May 3.

The focus then moves to the City Hotel – base for the RNA national conference in

2009 – where shipmates are invited to gather at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

At 10am the following day shipmates should muster at the Services Club in Spencer Road for the march-off at 10.30am to All Saints Church, Clooney, where a service of remembrance will be held.

The parade back to the club starting around midday, will include a march-past.

Veterans urged to register for June

WORLD War 2 veterans who are planning to attend commemorations to mark the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings in June are being asked to contact the Royal British Legion to make sure they can gain entry to the sites they wish to visit.

Because of the high-profile nature of D-Day 70 there will be

security restrictions in place in Normandy, and accreditation is required for many of the events during the anniversary period this summer.

The Royal British Legion and the Ministry of Defence will facilitate the accreditation required for sites in Normandy, and veterans are asked to contact the Legion as far as possible in advance.

The National Chairman of the Royal British Legion, John Crisford, said: "Our priority is to ensure all D-Day veterans who wish to attend events in Normandy in June have the access they require to commemorate this very special occasion."

"It's understandable, given the high-profile nature of these events, that some security

restrictions will be in place, and it's the Legion's role, along with the MOD, to make it as straightforward as possible for veterans to attend."

The Legion and MOD have responsibility for leading the nation in paying its respects to all those who fought and died in the D-Day landings and the subsequent Battle for Normandy through a series of events taking place on June 5 and 6, under the banner of D-Day 70.

Over the coming weeks, the Legion and MOD will be working towards the commemorations, which will include memorial services at Bayeux Cathedral and the Bayeux War Cemetery.

If you are, or know of, a World War 2 veteran planning to travel to Normandy in June this year, please contact the Legion either by email at dday70@britishlegion.org.uk or by writing to: D-Day 70, The Royal British Legion, Haig House, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA.

Navy News will be marking the 70th anniversary of Operation Neptune with two supplements, in May and June, looking at the preparations for the Normandy landings as well as events on D-Day itself.

Last call

DON'T forget that April 17 is the closing date for entries for this year's National Standard Bearers competition, which takes place at HMS Collingwood on May 17.

Names should be sent to S/M Mick Kieran at mick.kieran@virginmedia.com or on 07593 573301.

Victorious president

THE HMS Victorious Association is proud to announce that Lt Cdr Matthew Ball (Rtd) has been appointed as its president.

Lt Cdr Ball (aka Bobby to his shipmates) joined the Royal Navy in May 1998 and during his career served as a Marine Engineer Officer in HM Ships Invincible, Superb, Splendid, Sceptre and Victorious – hence the link.

He spent shore time with the Defence Logistic Organisation, the Captain of the Faslane Flotilla team and the Nuclear Safety Assurance Section within Clyde Naval Base. He also trained as a ship's diver.

He recently left the Navy to work in the offshore oil industry and, having done mandatory helicopter escape training, he now has the valuable ability to work above the water, on the water, below the water, and in the water.

Association secretary S/M Jim Collinson added that the organisation already has a padre, or else Matthew may have done the course to walk on the water as well.

Matthew (pictured right) has supported the association from the start of its connection with the current HMS Victorious.

Although the original association was for the ship's companies of aircraft carrier R38, from its refit in 1956 to its demise in 1968, there was also a wartime Victorious Association.

With the affiliation to the submarine it seemed the most logical step was to welcome all members from the carrier and the boat – and it now proudly boasts Swordfish pilots, Arctic Convoy survivors and other war veterans, members from the 50s and 60s and submariners of the present time.

A service is held at the National Memorial Arboretum every St George's Day – April 23 – and a reunion in Coventry is staged each October (usually the first weekend).

There are also several 'mini-meets' around the country and, when they can, they link up with their submarine counterparts.

www.hmsvictorousassociation.com



1957 kit list sparks memories

A sailor who joined the Royal Navy in the 1950s has listed the kit issued to him when he joined HMS Ganges, and thought it might be of some interest to those who followed in his footsteps.

Mr D Taylor, of Plymouth, said: "To the best of my recollection, I have listed the kit I was issued with when I joined HMS Ganges in January 1957.

"It might make interesting reading for today's recruits and serving members."

The list is:

No 1 Blue Suit; No 2 Blue Suit; two blue collars; two white fronts; one blue sea jersey; two black silks; two lanyards; two caps and cap tallies; two sets No 8s; one Burberry raincoat; one pair black woollen gloves; one black wool scarf; one pair black shoes; two pairs boots (one studded).

"One pair football boots; two pairs white gym shorts; one pair deck slippers (leather); two blue sports shirts; two white sports shirts; two pairs white sports shorts; two pairs overalls.

"Two pairs pyjamas; two pillow slips; two sheets; two towels; two knitted vests; two knitted underpants; two pairs wool socks; one oilskin.

"Brown pay book (kit record); one green pay book; one toothbrush and paste; one bar hard soap; one bar soft soap; one safety razor; two razor blades; one bar shaving soap; one shaving brush; one name tape (about two yards long); one hairbrush; one clothes brush; two shoe brushes; one tin boot polish; housewife [sewing kit] complete with needles; red silk (to sew name into most kit); blue wool (to darn socks); wooden mushroom [for darning]; scissors; one Seaman Manual; respirator; brown case; kitbag; knife, fork and spoon; one pint enamel mug; one hammock with clews and lashing; mattress; blanket and pillows.

"Later on, joining my first ship, I was then issued with full tropical uniform of two white suits; two pairs white shorts; stockings; white canvas shoes.

"I carried all this kit on to my Part 2 training and then to my first ship – it must have weighed about 120lbs at least.

"Kitbag over shoulder, hammock under arm – most cumbersome at best."

Sailing camp in Bulgaria

THE annual International Maritime Confederation (IMC) sailing camp will be held this year in Varna, Bulgaria, from July 31 to August 11, and shipmates may know a youngster who would benefit from the trip.

It does not have to be a Sea Cadet – it could be a shipmate's relative, so long as they are aged 15-19 on July 21.

They must have their own passport, and be able to swim 50 yards in light clothing.

Proposed names should be sent to Nigel at HQ by April 11.

The cost of the camp is likely to be in the order of £50, though parents are also responsible for the cost of travel to and from Varna, the largest city on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast.

↓ RNA HQ, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com

↓ 023 9272 3747

↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Project Faraday

DURING March the focus for the Faraday Team has been on the development and implementation of the syllabus for the CPO to WO Provisional Examination (PE).

Over the next few months the syllabi for the remaining rates will be developed and released. The format will be the same at each level, so it is worth looking at the CPO to WO PE syllabus whatever your rate.

The RNTM setting out what the Individual Competence Framework is and how it links into both your training and the workplace has been released – a more detailed RNTM will be issued in the summer.

New items of machinery have been delivered to HMS Sultan to enhance 'hands-on' training. A Hunt-class CAT main engine and T45 refrigeration plant are the first pieces of equipment, with more items on order and due to be delivered over the next 12 months.

There are plans to purchase new equipment to improve training in HMS Collingwood – more information on these items will follow when delivered. Information about this new equipment delivered so far is on the Faraday and Sultan websites.

On the subject of training; one of the more frequently asked questions we receive is: "Will we lose our accreditation with the revised courses?" The short answer is no.

The detailed answer is that until the course redesign work is complete the appropriate accreditation can't be agreed and applied. There is more detail about accreditation in JSP 898 Part 4 Chap 5.

Work has been started on how to 'stream' the current EGS personnel – this will require you to update your JPA 'employee preferences' with which 'stream' you wish to join.

The FARADAY Team will let you know what has been happening during April next month, so please look out for this regular feature. If you have any questions or comments on Project Faraday then please contact WO1 Sharky Ward on 93832 7441 or via e-mail navy_pers-faraday_WO1a

Recipe to solve the shortage of chefs

THIS month's 'Assignment Corner' is sponsored by the Logistics Career Managers (CM), and will focus on the operational pinch-point area of Royal Navy Leading Chefs (LChefs) and Chefs.

LChefs and Chefs are currently being managed as an operational pinch point (OPP) because of a shortage of fully-deployable personnel.

Measures have been taken to address this and the situation is expected to improve steadily over the course of the next 12 months.

However, the improvement will take time and gapping in some front-line units is likely to endure in the coming months.

If you are a LChef or Chef in your final three years of service and are interested in applying for an extension of service or FTRS contract, contact your CM for more information.

RN/RM Braiding.

The 2010 SDSR directed that the Naval Service as a whole should reduce in size and within that reduction the Royal Marines identified a number of positions in their logistic area that could be filled by RN Logistics Branch personnel. This included 97 RM Chef positions, known as the 'K Spec'.

Although service in RM units for RN personnel is not new, braiding does allow RN personnel to work in RM units and presents opportunities for interesting and rewarding jobs. Equally, opportunities exist for RM Chefs to serve afloat. The Devonport Career Management Cell has now assumed responsibility for the career management for all RM junior rates in the 'K Spec'.

If you wish to serve in a RM unit, you are advised to express an interest as early as possible because there is a range of Pre-

Drafty's corner



Joining Training to be completed. Please note that you don't need to have completed the All Arms Commando Course to serve in a braided position.

Loan Foreign Service (LFS) Assignments.

LFS assignments are available for LChef and Chef and, following a recent initiative to ensure all NATO posts attributed to the UK are filled, there will be plenty of opportunities for interesting employment overseas.

Such opportunities are always very popular but if you are interested, you should contact your CM and ensure your application for a LFS assignment is noted and recorded in your JPA preferences, ideally through the submission of an E240.

There is currently a shortage of LChefs in the Submarine Service, in both Devonport and Faslane. Volunteers are welcome, so if you would like more information, contact the Logs SM CMs in Devonport and Faslane.

Contacting your career manager

The preferred method of contact is via email; this allows CMs time to analyse their

Who to contact

Devonport

Darren Mellor 01752 555081/9375 65081
NAVY PERS-CMC D LLOG CHSTD (Mellor, Darren LWTR)
 Jessica Davidson 01752 555711/9375 65711
NAVY PERS-CMC D LOG CHSTD (Davidson, Jessica AB)
 Craig Charlton 01752 555244/9375 65244
NAVY PERS-CMC D SM LOG (Charlton, Craig AB)

Faslane

Gail MacLachlan 01436 674321 ext 6472/93255 6472
NAVY PERS-CMC F LOGS (MacLachlan, Gail AB)
 Kimberly Randall 01436 674321 ext 5580/93255 5580
NAVY PERS-CMC F GS (Randall, Kimberly LR)

Portsmouth

Rebecca Collins 02392 727956/9380 27956
NAVY PERS-CMC P LHCM CHSTD (Collins, Rebecca AB)
 Dawn Wilson 02392 725581/9380 25581
NAVY PERS-CMC P ABCM CHST (Wilson, Dawn AB)

manning plots and seek advice before responding. Face-to-face career interviews are also encouraged.

Ideally personnel should make contact with their CM when they have around 12 months remaining in post. This allows the CM time to identify suitable reliefs as well as giving you a realistic view of the positions available.

We are interested in any changes to your personal circumstances and any other information that you think may have a bearing on your career plans, or would like us to be aware of as we manage your career with you.

JPA and Administration

It is important that your contact details are correct and up to date in JPA. Civilian email and home/mobile phone numbers are useful to the CM.

Make sure that JPA reflects your true and realistic preferences. The needs of the Service guide CM assignment decisions but we do try to match these to your personal

preferences wherever possible.

We use FADs as an administrative tool to plan your moves. It is important to note your FAD is not set in stone and may be amended to suit the requirements of the Service.

However, we do not have all the information we need to ensure your FAD is appropriate so if you know you are due to leave your ship shortly after a work-up period or half-way through a deployment, please flag this fact up with your chain of command and ensure that your CM is aware.

If you wish to be considered for promotion, then JPA must reflect that you are in date for RNFT on your Common Reporting Date. Once selected you must also ensure you are in date on your Common Promotion Date.

Excessive leave balances hamper effective career management. It is your responsibility, in conjunction with your chain of command, to ensure that your leave balance is correctly maintained and that you do not allow excessive leave balances to build up.

Where to look

GALAXIES

06-2014 – Refuelling of HMS Vanguard
 05-2014 – New employment model – formal announcement of the Forces help-to-buy scheme

DIBS

DIB07/14 – Forces Help To Buy Home Purchase Loan Scheme Rules

RNTMs

RNTM 026/14 – The Worshipful Company of Engineers – Royal Navy Operational Engineering Award 2014.

RNTM 033/14 – Change to the Operational Performance Statement (OPS) requirement for ET(MESM)

RNTM 039/14 – Engineering Our Future – Our Strategy for Naval Engineering.

RNTM 053/14 – RN/RM Welfare Restructuring.

RNTM 056/14 – Rebalancing Lives Fund Grant Applications.

DINS
 2014DIN01-041: Amendment to the Entitlement to occupy Single Living Accommodation when serving Married Unaccompanied/Civil Partnership.

2014DIN02-006: Government Security Classification (GSC) policy: Industrial Security Implementation Guidance.

2014DIN02-002: Volunteers for Specialist HUMINT Duties – Op SAMSON (Replaced DIN 2013DIN02-007).

2014DIN07-012: Exercise CARIBBEAN WINGS 2014-15 – Exercise Instruction.

2014DIN07-11: Exercise ARCTIC EXPRESS 2014 – Exercise Instruction.

2014DIN09-004: Normandy 70 – 70th Anniversary of D-Day.

NEED to get your message across?

To feature in the *Navy News* Two-Six pages contact Navy Command Media – Internal Comms Staff Officer:

Lt Cdr Emma McCormick,
 93832 8809, email
 (Dii) NAVY
MEDIACOMMS-IC-TL
 (External)
NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk

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Your chance to put the RN in the big picture

DESMOND WETTERN was a distinguished naval writer and journalist, who for many years was the naval correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*.

Following his death in 1993, his widow, Gillian Wettern, set up the Desmond Wettern Royal Navy Media Award, which is presented annually at the Maritime Media Awards Foundation ceremony in London.

The award is presented to the best ship, submarine, Naval Air Squadron, Royal Marines unit or Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel which has done most to project a positive image of the Royal Navy in the preceding year and consists of a crystal decanter on a plinth of oak made from timber from HMS Victory.

The decanter is presented containing the equivalent of a bottle of port and it is a condition of winning that it is "never allowed to run dry". In addition to the trophy for the overall winner, certificates are awarded to winners in the following categories: Best Surface ship, Best Submarine, Best Unit and Best Use of the Web.

This year, the Desmond Wettern RN Media Award will be presented at the Maritime



● Last year's winner HMS Monmouth, represented by Lt Cdr Steve Gilmour, receives the trophy from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas

Media Awards ceremony in November at the Institute of Directors in London, with the Commanding Officer of the winning unit being presented with the trophy.

The winner last year was HMS Monmouth, represented by Lt Cdr Steve Gilmour, who received the trophy from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas.

The CO of HMS Monmouth, Cdr Gordon Ruddock, said:

"I am very pleased that our media efforts over the past year have been recognised with this prestigious award."

"Being away from home for seven months is part and parcel of Naval life, but through the various newspaper articles, web page updates and TV and radio interviews we have been able to keep our friends and family that bit better informed on what we have been up to."

When judging, credit will be given for making the most out of limited resources, therefore ensure that the size of the PR team and whether the unit has access to a photographer is included in the submission. No unit should consider themselves too small or lightly resourced to compete as the aim is to encourage participation and output across the Fleet.

It is important that the judges can see that consideration has been given to media engagement for the forthcoming reporting year. Whether on a major deployment or just routine business, it should show that every opportunity has been looked at in order to promote the Service across all media outlets.

When submitting entries many units in the past have used a diary format which chronicles the unit's media activity over the reporting year.

When considering which press releases to include in the submission, it is always useful to link them to the newspaper cuttings that resulted from the story, therefore enabling the judges to see the media effect.



If on deployment around the world do not forget to include any international media outlets that have provided positive media exposure and any articles that have made it into specialist magazines.

It is good to include CD/DVD clips of any TV appearances by the unit, but where that is not possible always ensure that details of the programme, including the broadcast date, are mentioned in the submission or include a link. The same applies to radio interviews – even if you do not have a transcript, give us the details.

And finally the big media outlet nowadays is social media, so please include any references to blogging, web pages etc.

Your entries should relate to the year ending June 30 2014 and the closing date for the receipt of submissions is Friday, October 3 2014.

As ever we look forward to reading your entries – good luck!

Any queries should be addressed to either Donna Stephens or Emma Carr, contact 93832 8822/8823 or **NAVY MEDIACOMMS-NEWS 1C/D**

Recruiting with pride

MEMBERS from the Royal Navy attended this year's National Student Pride, which was held at the University of Westminster, Marylebone Campus, in London at the end of February.

Student Pride is a host of events from film screenings to debates and social events. The Naval Service featured a stand at the event, alongside other companies such as BP, IBM, Tesco, KPMG, the RAF, and various Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) organisations such as Stonewall, the Terrence Higgins Trust and Sport Allies.

The event gave attendees a chance to engage with Naval Service LGBT personnel, and find out what it is like to be LGBT and serve in the Royal Navy.

If you would like to find out more information please contact the NSLGBT Network at **NAVY-NSLGBTNETWORK MAILBOX@mod.uk**

Walk the line

ARE you safe to drive? That was the question asked at HMS Collingwood during a road safety session.

Hampshire County Council's senior road safety officer Chris Collins visited the Fareham base to raise awareness of the dangers of driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Personnel had to walk a straight, marked line while counting from one and wearing blinding vision goggles.

AB Mark Lintott said: "The worst bit was looking at the ground and seeing two lines – it definitely impairs your vision."

Move aims to get Forces on property ladder

ALAN SHAW (ex-RN), director of local Fareham mortgage broker firm Mortgage Integrity, talked to the *Navy News* about how Naval personnel can benefit from the recent government schemes that are aimed at encouraging buyers onto the housing ladder.

Mortgage Integrity has been based in Fareham for over ten years and of the 11 members of the team four are ex-Royal Navy personnel, including one former Wren, a submariner and two surface sailors.

Help to Buy Shared Equity Scheme
How does it work?

With a Help to Buy: equity loan the government lends you up to 20 per cent

of the cost of your new-build home, so you'll only need a five per cent cash deposit and a 75 per cent mortgage to make up the rest.

You won't be charged loan fees on the 20 per cent loan for the first five years of owning your home.

The Help to Buy mortgage guarantee scheme, which has been extended to 2020, helps you buy a home with a deposit of only five per cent of the purchase price. The guarantee is provided to your lender, not to you, therefore you only need to make sure you have between 5-20 per cent deposit available.

Eligibility

To qualify for a Help to Buy mortgage guarantee, the home you want to buy must sell for £600,000 or less, not be a shared ownership or shared equity purchase, not be a second home and not be for renting out. The property can be newly-built or already existing.

You don't have to be a first-time buyer and there's no limit on your level of income, but you can't use Help to Buy with any other publicly-funded mortgage scheme, or an interest-only mortgage.

Coming Soon

The government is to offer Armed Forces personnel buying their first homes interest-free loans towards a deposit.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond announced that Servicemen and women will be able to borrow an interest-free amount of up to 50 per cent of their salary to a limit of £25,000.

The loan is repayable over ten years and is designed to address the low rate of home ownership among the Forces.

The scheme starts on April 1 2014.

Armed Forces personnel have lower levels of home ownership than the general population, and those who leave often cite the desire to own a home as one of the key reasons why they leave, the Ministry of Defence said.

And the MOD said Armed Forces staff often experience difficulty getting

credit because of frequent moves and deployments.

Mr Hammond said: "Service personnel can struggle to enter the housing market as they move around throughout their military career.

"By giving our troops this extra help they will be more able to set down roots and get onto the property ladder. It further demonstrates the government's commitment to strengthen the Armed Forces Covenant."

*Alan Shaw, Mortgage Integrity
54a High Street, Fareham, Hampshire
PO16 7BG
01329 822878
www.mortgagegrity.co.uk*

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION



Take a look at our friendlier website

THE NFF has a new-look website, writes Jane Williams, Deputy Chairwoman. www.nff.org.uk has been given a makeover and now has a fresh, modern appearance.

It remains packed full of up-to-date news and information for families, but is now streamlined to make it more user-friendly.

It includes a new section for Reserves, and the Armed Forces Covenant section has been expanded; providing much more information about how the Covenant is progressing and improving things for families in real terms. You can view the site whilst out and about via mobile devices, or you can sign up to the RSS Feed to receive the latest updates straight to your e-mail or RSS Reader. The website is updated daily with breaking news and information.

Spring Homeport: Out now

Our spring magazine is now available, as always it is jammed full of information. Highlights include updates on the New Employment Model, on the progress of the Armed Forces Covenant,

and on the new Personal, Family and Community support services. Visit our website to read the latest magazine or email editor@nff.org.uk to join the mailing list.

New Approach to RN/RM Welfare

Following a comprehensive review, the Naval Personal and Family Service (NPFS) and Royal Marines Welfare (RMW) has been transformed into a new organisation called RN/RM Welfare.

The organisation stood up on March 1 2014. The newly-formed RN/RM Welfare Team has introduced a single point of contact – the RN/RM Welfare Portal – which allows easy access for families, Service personnel, and units to all welfare services.

The Portal Team is staffed by experienced civilian and Service specialist welfare personnel who are able to assess, in partnership with families and other professionals, the services that can be provided by RN/RM Welfare.

The RN/RM Welfare Portal can be used for all enquiries relating to

personal or family issues, community development and welfare/HIVE information; however, you will still be able to visit one of the RN/RM Welfare offices if you want to speak to a member of staff face-to-face.

The contact details for the RN/RM Welfare Portal are: Phone: (Mil): 9380 28777; (Civ): 0044 (0)23 9272 8777; Email: navyers-welfare@mod.uk

The RN/RM Welfare Portal operates during office hours from 0800 to 1630. Outside of these hours, you should continue to use the Officer of the Watch, where you may be directed to the Out-of-Hours service for any emergency provision.

Northern Area – 01436 674 321
Eastern Area – 023 9272 6159
Western Area – 01752 555 220
RM Stonehouse – 01752 836 395

The setting up of the RN/RM Welfare Portal strives to ensure that all Naval Service Personnel and their families have a simple, effective way of accessing the high quality welfare and support services that the Navy provides. Details via Galaxy 07-2014.

Armed Forces Pay Review Body – 2014 Report has been published.

The 2014 Report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) that makes recommendations on the pay and charges of 1-Star Officers and below, was published on March 13 2014. The government has accepted the recommendations in full. Personnel will therefore see the following impacts of the award, where relevant, in their April 2014 pay statements, which include:

- An increase of one per cent to all base military salaries.
- A one per cent increase to Compensatory Allowances, Reserve Bounties, Call-Out Gratuity and most Recruitment and Retention Payment categories.
- Further targeted increases aimed at providing higher levels of compensation to those with the greatest levels of separation during their military careers.
- Overall increases to accommodation charges for Single Living Accommodation and furnished Service Families Accommodation.

Further details can be found in Defence Internal Brief 2014DIB/15.

What do you think of the award? Let us know – the next AFPRB meeting for the NFF to take your comments to is diarised for October 8.

Service Complaints Commissioner given enhanced power

The Defence Secretary announced on March 13 that the Service Complaints system will be reformed and the Service Complaints Commissioner (SCC) given new powers as the Service Complaints Ombudsman.

Once the required legislation has been passed, the new approach will make it possible for a complainant, after one level of appeal, to ask the independent Service Complaints Ombudsman to review the handling of their complaint if they are not satisfied it has been dealt with correctly. Details on www.nff.org.uk

To contact the NFF: Tel: 023 9265 4374, email: admin@nff.org.uk. Subscribe to our monthly e-update: info@nff.org.uk. Find us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.



Close Nitze ties with US

"YOU are joining the USS Nitze. You are going to have a blast!"

That was the email received by Wildfire's Lt Cdr Tim Williams when he was selected as one of five RNR sailors to visit the USA on an annual exchange of military personnel.

As an added bonus when Tim arrived in Norfolk, Virginia, to meet his host, Lt Cdr Tom Shear, they realised their paths had crossed previously when Tim was mobilised to Bahrain and Tom was CO of a US minehunter.

The schedule was packed and, following a short acclimatisation weekend, Tim – pictured above on the fo'c'sle of the battleship USS Wisconsin, now a museum – was picked up by sea boat to join the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer which was sitting off the east coast.

Climbing aboard Tim was welcomed by the XO, Cdr Nakamura and shown to his 'stateroom'.

"This is where I began to learn a new vocabulary – once I had stowed my gear in my stateroom (cabin)," said Tim.

A tour of the bridge was followed by the engineering department, the engine room and the location of the main compartments where he was able to meet key personnel.

Immediately getting stuck in, Tim joined the bridge team for gunnery practice at a target – known in the USN as in the RN as a 'killer tomato': a five-metre bright red inflatable ball fired at from a distance using the 5in main mounting.

The reservist also witnessed the preparations to launch a drone from the flight deck.

Moving further into the heart of the ship Tim visited the Command Information Centre (ops room in RN parlance) to observe an underwater defence exercise, followed by another gunnery serial: Naval Gunfire Support.

The ship's busy programme continued the following day with a Replenishment at Sea with the USNS Robert E Perry on the port side.

The ships exchanged lines, the fuel line was passed and then the Nitze maintained station as the fuel was passed, before a breakaway where the lines were returned and the receiving ship pulls ahead to a salute and to the accompaniment of Led Zeppelin, this was completed to perfection.

As the visit came to a close, Tim worked as one of the bridge team for the entry into Norfolk, Virginia, and was hugely impressed as the pilot took the USS Nitze alongside.

"This is the highlight of my career in the RNR," said Tim.

"I was very fortunate to spend my time on the Nitze – it's a great ship and a great crew. I just hope that I get to work with the USN in the future."

"I will certainly recommend an exchange to my colleagues – it is a great opportunity to understand how our US allies work while adding to our naval experience."

Freeze company

THIS is not some ancient Inuit ritual played out under brilliant skies in an Arctic wonderland.

This is one way to survive in the harshest environment known to mankind – a tent insulated with local flora and surrounded by a protective wall of ice blocks.

Learning how to build one of these shelters – and more importantly how to fight in such an unforgiving world of white – are part-time Royal Marines, who deployed alongside their full-time green beret brethren for the Corps' annual winter workout.

Exercise Hairspring is the annual cold weather training exercise for the Royal Marines Reserve, making use of the hospitality... and especially the snow... of the Norwegians at Åsegarden, just outside the small northern port of Harstad.

Over the course of two weeks, the reservists have to adapt and work as part of a cold weather team – for some that means learning to ski for the first time, but for all it sees them learning to find food, build shelters and carry out operations successfully in temperatures as low as -30°C.

Having earned his green beret last year, Hugh Wright was a Norway virgin with the RMR. The 35-year-old doctor, from Oxford, had never been on skis in his life.

"Seeing as I've never done this before I'm having to very quickly learn to ski in order to keep up," he said.

"The training is tough and the environment dangerous so teamwork is essential in Norway to ensure everyone remains safe and warm."

With a tight training schedule, the novelty of being in the Arctic Circle quickly wore off; just two days into their training the men were camping in the snow-covered mountains.

Cpl Thomas Davis has been a reservist for five years but in that time never undertaken cold weather training. The 25-year-old motor racing engineer from Liverpool said the weather conditions added a sense of urgency to the training and brought his team closer together.

"Norway has been like nothing I've experienced before with the guys really having to pull together and facing every obstacle head on; that's what I like most about the Royal Marines – no challenge is too big," he said.

As the UK's cold weather warfare specialists, training in the Arctic is, says Lt Col Richard Parvin, CO of **RMR Scotland**, "at the core of what we as Royal Marines do; it is in our DNA."

"With the Corps having now withdrawn from Afghanistan it gives us the opportunity to go back to our roots and perfect the soldiering skills needed to fight in any cold and harsh environment and Norway provides the perfect training conditions."

The RMR took 67 of its number to northern Norway, plus six comrades from the Royal

Netherlands Marine Corps.

Lt Col Parvin added: "Reservists are everyday men from every walk of life who have a unique bond in that they are members of a 350-year-old family."

"They are a small band of highly-committed individuals who manage their civilian and family lives to undertake intensive, yet rewarding, training and deploy around the globe. Coming to Norway is a big commitment for them, it's the harshest environment to fight in; with learning to survive against the elements being a constant challenge."

"They are pushed hard during the two weeks but equally there are moments of fun and a real sense of achievement at the end."

The Corps has been training in Norway since the late '60s, hence the Royal Marines' reputation as Britain's cold warfare experts.

"Norway is about soldiering in a hard, dangerous environment but the skills learned out here are transferrable to other climates and conditions," said Col Kevin Oliver, Deputy Commander 3 Cdo Bde.

"Most of the marines would agree that it is hard work, and challenging, but that they also enjoy themselves along the way."

■ Meanwhile in the much warmer surroundings of Staffordshire... Ten young candidates from the Midlands and North of England were put through the tough potential Royal Marines Reserve selection process.

Over two days they were physically and mentally assessed for their ability to conduct commando training before being taken on exercise for a night in very wet and windy conditions.

The hopefuls completed a swimming test, followed by a three-mile run and a Royal Marines fitness assessment.

On completion they were taught how to cook and erect shelters.

"It's then an uncomfortable night out in a very dark, wet and windy training area near Stoke," said WO2 Jim Twycross of **RMR Merseyside**.

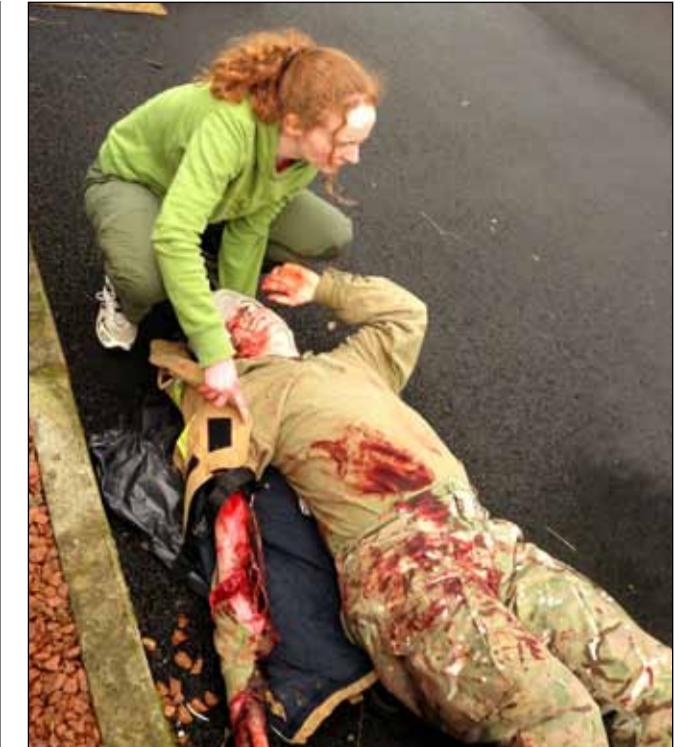
"The young men are rudely awoken at first light when the Royal Marine physical training instructors put them through a tough motivation and physical exercise regime."

Eight out of the ten potential candidates were successful and will begin their 12-month quest for the coveted green beret later in the year.

"It was harder than I expected but I am determined to fit the commando course in with my studies," said 18-year-old student Jonathan Steen from Buxton.

Will Chambers, a 27-year-old project manager from Stourbridge, added: "It's been very demanding with little time to yourself, although it's satisfying to have finished and passed."

Picture: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, FRPU East



Dalriada demonstrations

THIS is the (rather bloody) sight which greeted those who accepted the invite from **HMS Dalriada** to its second RNR Live event of 2014.

The Glasgow unit laid on various eye-catching displays for those interested in joining the reserves – fire-fighting (enhanced by AB Chris Harron and his fire engine from Glasgow airport), first aid and weapons drills, plus an assault course courtesy of RMR Scotland's detachment based in the Clyde city.

Two dozen people – ranging from Glasgow Royal Infirmary's A and E dept to schoolboys from Helensburgh – witnessed the demonstrations.

No FLEX, please, we're reservists

THERE was a Member of Parliament, a social worker and a clinical pharmacist...

Not the opening gambit from a 1970s clubland comedian, but a snapshot of some of the men and women hoping to earn their spurs as officers in the Royal Naval Reserve.

The group of 11 young officers took to the Dart in BRNC's picket boats and motor whalers for the final leadership exercise of their training. Taking turns to act as the commanding officer, XO, the boat coxswain and crew, the group spent the weekend on the river where their command, leadership and management skills were assessed.

To make the assessment – known as FLEX, or Final Leadership EXercise – as realistic as possible, the scenarios were based on current Royal Navy operations.

In challenging weather conditions, the group was charged with carrying out reconnaissance missions, replenishments at sea (not quite on the scale of the real thing...) and a number of other practical leadership tasks. They faced mock attacks from small boats and were assessed throughout on what they had learnt during their two years of training. As the climax of FLEX, crews were required to give a brief on the intelligence they had gleaned throughout the weekend in preparations for a fictitious amphibious assault.

"This was by far the most challenging exercise I've taken part in and you really felt that all the skills, knowledge and resilience you'd built up over training were being tested to the max," said Acting Sub Lt Penny Mordaunt, MP for Portsmouth North and a reservist with the city's RN unit, HMS King Alfred.

Fellow King Alfred acting subbie Dom Simonis, a researcher by day, added: "It was an excellent weekend's training. Having such an immersive scenario was an exciting development to sequential practical leadership tasks, adding new challenges both as a leader and a team member."

"The main mission and numerous sub tasks were engaging but also relevant to activities we may be required to do in the Fleet."

FLEX was devised by reservist Lt Simon Marsden from HMS President in London. The exercise is one of a number of improvements to the training programme for new RNR officers.

Reserve cadets carry out most of their training at their units, as well as undergoing a series of weekend training courses, a two-week confirmation course at BRNC and two weeks at sea.

"I really get the feeling the bar for RNR young officer training has been raised over the past few years and they've certainly broken new ground with the FLEX assessment," said acting Sub Lt Phil Roberts, an environmental engineer from HMS Eaglet in Liverpool.

Next up for those who passed FLEX is the Fleet Board, an oral assessment which brings the curtain down on two years of initial officer training, and should they come through that, the junior RNR officers will move on to instruction in their specialist fields.

"The cadets finished the exercise with beaming smiles – and equipped with the confidence that they can perform effectively as courageous leaders," said Lt Cdr Graeme Deighton, the Officer-in-Charge of FLEX.



Victory attracts trophies

THE trophy cabinet in Victory Squadron (VS), HMS Collingwood, needed to be enlarged to accommodate the impressive haul of silverware that has been awarded to the group over the past year.

Responsible for the divisional care of all Phase 2 Warfare and Weapon Engineering trainees, the squadron has been honoured with an array of trophies in recognition of the sterling work undertaken to ensure that the trainees of today are ready for the rigours of life at sea.

These have included awards from the Mayor of Fareham, Portsmouth News and the Worshipful Company of Engineers, as well as a clutch of efficiency awards from the Commanding Officer of the Maritime Warfare School.

So how has the VS made such an impression?

Firstly the vital statistics – in 2013 more than 50 classes joined the squadron, creating a standing population of some 250 trainees, resulting in 498 trained and motivated men and women joining the Fleet for their first assignments.

Whilst all trainees will have completed the ten-week Initial Naval Training package at HMS Raleigh, what becomes immediately clear on joining the staff in VS is that there is no such thing as an average trainee.

With an age range of 16-37, some lack formal qualifications, others are university graduates or are on their second or third career path; there are those who are single, married, or have their own families, but what unites them all is a desire to be challenged, enthused and part of a team – which is where VS excels.

Following a hectic extracurricular programme of events, you may have seen VS trainees (recognisable by their white flash on their epaulettes along with the HMS Collingwood cap tally) at events as diverse as the RNA Biennial Parade at the Cenotaph, supporting the annual veterans' cruise on the Dunkirk Little Ships, collecting money as part of London Poppy Day, supporting the Go Rhinoceros project organised by Marwell Zoo or carrying out manual labour at a host of charity projects.

Navy events have included Exercise Trafalgar, a command, leadership and management exercise based on a disaster relief scenario, and Exercise Nile, a water-based adventurous training weekend designed to develop sea-sense and build team skills, while the Operation Inspire programme delivers lectures on a regular basis by external speakers on topics intended to stimulate interest in the wider Navy.

All such events are essential in developing the Naval ethos and core military values crucial for success in the Fleet.

On a day-to-day basis, VS staff ensure that the transition from life ashore to life at sea is smoothed by way of a Naval General Training package which complements their core professional training – this includes both watches, night rounds, cleaning ship and early morning activities.

This hard work is paying dividends because as well as the new additions to the trophy cabinet, the voluntary outflow of Phase 2 trainees has decreased over the last year to 1.6 per cent.

VS is seeking highly-motivated leading hands and senior rates who are ready for the challenges involved in successfully preparing the next generation of sailors. This is an ideal posting to strengthen promotion prospects.

Contact WO1 Fisher ([MWS-VS-EWO](#)) for more details.

No butts – Big Cig is targeted

Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald



ROYAL Navy establishments up and down the UK have been wheeling out a grumpy-looking half-smoked cigarette butt to give him a metaphorical (and sometimes literal) kicking.

As part of the national No Smoking Day campaign, the Forces run their own initiatives, and Big Cig (pictured left at Clyde Naval Base) is one of the main targets.

Health professionals, including dental specialists and PTIs, at Clyde, HMS Raleigh and HMS Collingwood *inter alia* made sure there was plenty of information and support for serving personnel, civilians and family members who wanted to quit smoking.

In some cases – such as Yeovilton – the no-smoking message was part of a wider health programme that included advice on lifestyle, drugs and fitness.

It is estimated that some ten million Britons smoke on a regular basis, and of those around two-thirds would consider quitting. National No Smoking Day is thought to prompt around 750,000 people to give up the habit – and those who buy into the initiative (which this year went under the banner 'V for Victory') and use expert help are estimated to have four times as much chance of succeeding as those who attempt to quit on their own.



Society will be on air at Collingwood

THE Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society will again be providing live television coverage of the HMS Collingwood Open Day on May 31 and stream it live over the Internet.

Teams of mobile TV cameras will be covering all the events, feeding the pictures back to the amateur TV control desk in the HQ Shack in Collingwood (pictured above from last year).

The events will then be streamed to [www.batc.tv](#), the website of the British Amateur Television Club.

The RNARS was set up in 1960 to promote and foster amateur radio activity within the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, and it has links with similar groups in the other UK Services and with other navies around the world.

The inaugural meeting was held in the cinema of HMS Mercury at East Meon, Hampshire, but the society's HQ is now at Collingwood, where the Royal Navy trains its communicators as well as many other warfare specialisations.

Membership is open to all radio amateurs with an interest in maritime affairs, and it has members around the globe, including Australia, Canada, South Africa and the USA.

Members receive copies of the society's newsletter, which is published three times a year, and is available electronically or by conventional postal means.

And it was an electronic version of an old magazine posted online by the society that led to a Chichester man being put back in touch with his family.

A copy of *The Communicator*, the magazine of the Royal Navy's Communicators Branch, was uploaded to the RNARS website ([www.rnar.org.uk/HistoryMiscellany.html](#)) where it was seen by a relative of the man.

One photograph from a 1950s edition showed someone with a strong resemblance to the Chichester man, and he used it as a starting point for a family search.

That search was partially successful – he found members of his family, but also discovered that his father had died years ago. [www.rnar.org.uk](#)

Graphic change

THE new Navy Publications and Graphics Organisation (NPGO) has been commissioned by RN Finance Director Louise Tullett.

The group, formerly known colloquially as 'Fleet Graphics', is Navy Command's single authority responsible for the timely dissemination of operational and non-technical Books of Reference, Classified Books, RN Communication Publications, Joint Service Publications, Allied Publications and Port Guides on behalf of the Fleet Commander.

Much of the publication is done in electronic format, though for operational reasons there is still the requirement for paper products.

The NPGO Graphics Studio at Whale Island in Portsmouth, also provides a consultancy service for professional design and printing to all Navy Command personnel.

Navy expertise is vital for air power

NAVAL personnel still have important roles to play in Afghanistan – including crucial support to a Royal Air Force group providing security across eight million square miles of land and sea.

Maritime expertise is integrated with air power to underpin the operations of 83 Expeditionary Air Group across Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Air Cdre Al Gillespie, the Air Officer Commanding 83 EAG and the RAF's senior operational commander in the region, said: "There's a co-dependency between the Royal Navy and the RAF in terms of how we support each other when we operate at range from the UK."

"In the Gulf, where both Services are heavily involved in assuring the UK's allies of our support for peace and security, it's important we work closely together to achieve the right strategic outcomes for the UK and its regional partners.

"It's been enormously gratifying to see how closely my officers have worked with their Royal Navy counterparts, and similarly to see how well Navy personnel have performed when embedded in RAF units here and in Afghanistan.

"This bodes incredibly well for the future of joint operations."

83 EAG works through five deployed Expeditionary Air Wings, two in Afghanistan.

903 EAW operates from Camp Bastion airfield – the fifth busiest British-operated airfield in the world, and pivotal to the drawdown of equipment and personnel from Afghanistan.

Aircraft from Afghanistan frequently route over the Gulf, where Coalition naval vessels can control airspace and provide protection and space if necessary.

Aircraft movements are monitored in the Combined Air Ops Centre, where 83 EAG commanders and their Coalition



● PO James Carlill

Picture: Sgt Si Pugsley (RAF)

partners see the tracks of aircraft and vessels on cinema-sized screens.

One of the sailors making that integration work is RN Liaison Officer Lt Cdr Carlos Garreta, based in the HQ of 83 EAG.

"On a day-to-day basis I provide a source of maritime air defence expertise, and for me this is a golden opportunity to bring my air warfare skills to bear and see how the RAF works when deployed on operations," he said.

"My secondary duty is to look for and plan training opportunities."

Lt Cdr Garreta said of his time alongside the RAF: "We have a long track record of working together.

"Individuals working in key places make the relationships work.

"If you come with an open mind, enthusiasm and a sense of humour the relationship is alive and kicking."

He believes relevant experience and regional knowledge is critical.

"I was trained as a Fighter Controller in 2004 at Yeovilton before joining HMS York when she supported the non-combatant evacuation operation from Beirut in 2006," he said.

"I saw further service in the Middle East on HMS

Northumberland when escorting World Food Programme ships to Mogadishu."

Lt Cdr Garreta also spent time on the Herrick desk at Permanent Joint HQ and with the Libya campaign.

Naval integration can also be found in the high desert of Afghanistan at 904 EAW, in the eastern province of Kandahar.

This Air Wing is host to the tactical air transport provided by C-130 and BAe 146 aircraft as well as a detachment of Tornado GR4 jets supporting ground operations with frequent imagery gathering sorties.

II (AC) Squadron from Marham have just taken over from 617 'Dambusters' squadron, who carried out nearly 200 sorties during their three-month tour – and PO James Carlill was at the heart of the deployment.

PO Carlill was until recently second-in-command, managing day-to-day tasking in the Tactical Imagery Intelligence Wing detachment, interpreting imagery collected by the RAF to provide intelligence for Afghan ground forces.

He said: "It has been very rewarding because the feedback has been very, very positive – we've been making a difference to operations on the ground by giving analysis to prepare for missions."

PO Carlill has been able to bring a wealth of naval

experience to the role.

He said: "I have worked in intelligence at sea and with my experience in joint intelligence courses I can see how many principles of intelligence and imagery analysis are common across maritime and air operations."

Another dimension of cooperation comes from Lt Cdr Kevin Thomas, who we featured in the March edition of *Navy News*.

The officer was a meteorologist in the RN from 1981 to 2009 before joining the RNR, and is now based with 902 EAW.

From an airfield in the Middle East he supports the flight plans for the RAF's Sentinel surveillance aircraft.

"When taking off and landing as close to civilian airports as we are here, the aircrew need good forecasts of cloud cover to plan routes with sufficient levels of visual contact with the airfield," said Lt Cdr Thomas.

Deep local experience on the regional weather and sea states is particularly useful.

"Wave height information is important for operations where small skiffs and fishing vessels are concerned," he said.

Lt Cdr Garreta concluded: "From a defence point of view, the time of operating as a single Service is well and truly over – if it ever existed."

Show support for the Forces



ARMED FORCES DAY
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

CITIES, communities and local organisations across the UK are being asked to show their support for Servicemen and women past and present by hosting an Armed Forces Day event this summer.

Since 2009, Armed Forces Day has been marked annually with events large and small throughout the UK, and this year the focus of the celebrations will fall on Saturday June 28, when a major national event will be held in the city of Stirling, in Scotland.

Last year more than 340 events took place in all parts of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, many of which were made possible through funding from the Ministry of Defence.

They included Armed Forces Day tea parties, parades, big band concerts, civil war military re-enactments and live and static demonstrations.

They all enabled the public to show their support for the men and women of the wider Armed Forces community, including current personnel, veterans, cadets and families.

Organisers say that no event is too big or small to show appreciation for the work of the Forces at home and abroad.

Cllr Tom Fox, Leader of Scarborough Borough Council, which received funding with their celebrations in June 2013, said: "Last year, with the help of MOD funding, Scarborough had a fun-filled Armed Forces Day attended by 30,000 people."

"It was a fantastic day with parades, displays and even the spectacular Red Arrows, all in honour of our Service personnel and the sacrifices they make."

[www.armedforcesday.org.uk](#)



● Lt Cdr Carlos Garreta at work in the headquarters of 83 Expeditionary Air Group

Picture: Sgt Ross Tilly (RAF)



Reunions

May 2014

HMS Wizard & Cadiz joint reunion to be held at the Inglewood Hotel, Torquay, Devon May 9-12. Membership open to all Battle-class and V & W-class destroyers and Type 15 frigates. Contact secretary Jim Watkins on 10 Trewidden Close, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 1LN, tel 01872 274419 or email jimandleah@hotmail.co.uk

HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association open to anyone who served at any time on these ships. Membership £8 per annum; magazine produced three times per year. Next AGM and social May 9-12 at Southport. Enquiries to Leigh Easton, Glenmoray, Hayford Place, Cambusbarrow, Stirling FK7 9JX or nsgst@tiscali.co.uk website www.bulwarkassoc.co.uk

HMS Illustrious Association Southern branch reunion to be held at Conniston Hotel, Sittingbourne, May 9-12. Guided tour of Chatham Dockyard and visit to Eastchurch. Contact Frances Garton on 07985 196908.

June 2014

The 2nd HMS Manchester reunion to be held in the WO, SR & SNCOS Mess, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, over the weekend June 7-8. For details see www.2ma.org.uk/ or contact Steve Swaine on 07855 628255 or at stevie27@hotmail.com or Ian Tidbury at iantsids@ntlworld.com

September 2014

HMS Indomitable Association reunion to be held at The Metropole Hotel, Blackpool September 12-15. Call Douglas Banks on 0161 368 6945 or email illie35@uwclub.net

Deaths

Rear Admiral Hubert Walter Elphinstone Hollins CB. Joined BRNC as cadet aged 13 in 1937; appointed Commander 1957, Captain 1963 and Rear-Admiral 1972. Spent war years in the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Arctic and Western Pacific, served in Liverpool, Glasgow, London, Quadrant, Pytchley, Cygnet, Armada and Albion and commanded HMS Petard, Dundas, Caesar and Antrim. Flag Officer Gibraltar 1972-74 and Admiral Commanding Reserves 1974-77; appointed CB 1974. Younger Brother to the Trinity House 1978 and appointed to the Trinity House Lighthouse Board 1985-91. Trustee Royal Merchant Navy School, Bearwood, 1985-92, President Newbury RNA 1985-90 and of the Newbury Sea Cadet unit 2003-2010; Patron of the Milford Haven SCC, January 31. Aged 90.

Capt John Huckle DSC*. Served in the lower deck before being commissioned a midshipman (RNVR); first serving as a submariner before becoming anti-submarine warfare officer in HMS Calder (Arctic Convoys). Awarded DSC for his part in destruction of U-1051 in 1945, sinking U-774 and damaging another he was awarded Bar to DSC; he then served in submarine HMS Vulpine, 1946 as an RN lieutenant he was appointed aide-de-camp to the Governor of the Falkland Islands, then base commander at Port Lockroy on Graham Land (Antarctic Peninsula) and later at Deception Island (South Shetlands), 1951 he was appointed King's Harbour Master where his responsibilities included seaplanes used as

October 2014

HMS Cheviot Association reunion to be held at the Inglewood Hotel, Torquay October 24-27. Contact Basil Downing-Waite on 01752 771983 or email bazval@btinternet.com

HMS Dainty Association reunion to be held October 10-12 at the RNLI College, Poole. Contact David Erwin on 01977 650278 or email davidewin@talktalk.net

HMS Sirius 'Amphibious' Reunion to take place at The Nautical Club, Birmingham October 4. Contact CPO Ayres, HMS Forward, 42 Tilton Rd, Birmingham, B9 4PP, tel 0121 703 6379 or at Andrew.ayres519@mod.uk. Details can also be found at hms-sirius.info, or the HMS Sirius group on Facebook.

November 2014

GLARAC, Glorious, Ardent & Acasta Association: Remembrance Day Parade, November 9 in London. Contact Greg Monteith on 01243 532916 or at gregmonteith@wsht.nhs.uk

HMS Eagle 42nd Anniversary 'Nautical Experience' reunion to be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea November 14-16. Meet and greet Friday, various tours from the hotel Saturday with dinner/dance and entertainment in the evening. All commissions 1952-72 welcome with wives, partners and guests. Contact main organizer Danny du Feu ddf.photography@gmail.com 07966 258103, 57 Westover Rd, Leicester, LE3 3DU or events secretary Bill Melvin on 07741 300750, bill.melvin2@btinternet.com

September 2014
HMS Indomitable Association reunion to be held at The Metropole Hotel, Blackpool September 12-15. Call Douglas Banks on 0161 368 6945 or email illie35@uwclub.net

Deaths

air ambulances, and in order to act as relief pilot for the flying doctor he spent his first leave in England learning to fly. Awarded the Polar Medal 1953 and an 8,000ft peak on Alexander Island was named Mount Huckle. As navigator in the Danish coaster Oluf Sven he returned to the Antarctic in 1957 and later signed a contract with a whaling company to serve as a helicopter pilot. His career encompassed more than 10,000 hours flying. December 9. Aged 89.

Cdr John H Morgan. HMS Nubian, Eagle, Gurkha, Blake, Sabre, Antrim, Hermes and Cardiff February 12. Aged 64.

Capt David F Watts. HMS Verulam, Abdiel, Cochrane, Cdr HMS Victory (Base), DNFCT 1986, February 13.

Capt Roger G Bridgeman. HMS Dreadnought, Sovereign, Defiance and DNO(A(E), February 21.

Cdr Walter Cyril Kirk. Served 1944-81. Commanded HMS Kirkliston and Argonaut also CO of HMS Drake in the 1970s. Awarded the OBE for his RN service during the strike by firemen. March 1. Aged 84.

Cdr Clement A 'Clem' Cambrook. HMS Victorious, HMNB Singapore and Portsmouth, also BRNC. February 28.

Cdr Kenneth E England. HMS Mull-of-Kintyre, RN Barracks (Portsmouth), Warrior and Hampshire. February 19. Aged 92.

Cdr Antony R Evans. HMS Eagle and Ulster. Awarded the Shawell Testimonial Prize, February 7. Aged 81.

Cdr Christopher H Fothergill. HMS Hartland Point and Carysfort. February 21.

Promotions & Assignments

Brig M L Smith to be promoted to Maj Gen RM and to be Commander UK Amphibious Forces and Commandant General Royal Marines in succession to Major Gen E G M Davis with effect from June.

Lt Gemma L Britton to be CO of HMS Express from February 26.

Lt Iain Giffin to be CO of HMS Archer from March 18.

Cdr H R Sanguinetto to be Deputy Director Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence from October.

Capt M J Wainhouse to be promoted Commodore and to be Assistant Commandant Maritime at the Defence Academy from April 22.

Capt T J Guy to be Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Force Generation from April 2.

Capt M J C Magan to be Captain Maritime Commissioning Trials and Assessment from April 29.

Capt C E W King to be Principal Security Advisor from April 2.

Capt C M Skidmore to be Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Pay and Pension Allowance from March 25.

Capt D G Childs to be Deputy Release to Service Authority from June 3.

Cdr J R G Abernethy to be promoted Captain and to be Captain Surface Ships, Devonport from March 25.

Cdr R J Ansty to be promoted Captain and to be Flag Officer Sea Training, Director North from March 25.

Cdr D P T Stempbridge to be promoted Captain and to be Deputy Head Capability and Integration CEPP from July.

Cdr A Hancock to be promoted Acting Captain and to be Defence Attaché Buenos Aires from May.

Selections for promotion to Lieutenant Commander RN and Major RM; effective October 1 2014

Warfare: Lt M W Adam; A/Lt Cdr P H Armand-Smith; Lt C D Armstrong; Lt R P Attwater; Lt B T Barrett; Lt J W Betchley; Lt M P Bird; Lt G R Boulton; Lt D M Brannigan; Lt S A Brian; Lt M A Brown; Lt D G Bryden; Lt J W Campbell-Baldwin; Lt P J H Chisholm; Lt M Clarke; Lt A G D Claxton; Lt J M P Crompton; Lt G A Dalgleish; A/Lt Cdr M Daughish; Lt P H Davis; Lt C M Dick; Lt J C Duffy; Lt S D Dyer; Lt P J Everard; Lt J H G Fletcher; A/Lt Cdr M E Fooks-Bale; Lt E M R Freeman; Lt A V Gaunt; Lt M A Gilbert; Lt R D Goosen; Lt A G Hampson; Lt J D Hannigan; Lt S Heaton; Lt C J Hill; Lt A J Hudson; A/Lt Cdr M Humphries; Lt B P Hunt; Lt S C Jane; A/Lt Cdr G J L Jones; A/Lt Cdr R L Kemp; Lt T D Langford; A/Lt Cdr T J Lett; Lt M J Lindeyer; Lt H C London; Lt A J Mahoney; Lt C Marjoribanks; Lt S D Marsh; Lt B R Martin; Lt B D McCavour; A/Lt Cdr P Meacher; Lt P D Meigh; Lt S Mittens; Lt B P Morgan; Lt E G Moss-Ward; Lt R D C Nash; A/Lt Cdr R P Nash; Lt S D Nightingale; Lt E J Notley; Lt D Oakley; A/Lt Cdr P C Owen; Lt M R Page; Lt A M Pariser; Lt D N Pellecchia; Lt A N Petch; Lt M R Pickles; Lt B J Piper; A/Lt Cdr A J Plenty; Lt G N J Pugh; Lt L B Ray; Lt J A Reeve; Lt R A Riley; Lt C S Roberts; Lt M J Round; Lt J L Royston; Lt D R Scales; Lt A J Scott; Lt M R Seal; Lt H Sedgwick MBE; A/Lt Cdr I A Sloan; Lt D J Smith; Lt A C Stirling; Lt S A Taylor; Lt A J Thompson; Lt C F Thompson; Lt A R Tyler; Lt I A Van Duin; Lt M J Walker; A/Lt Cdr M T Ward; Lt S J Wareham; Lt M J Warren; Lt K N N Weston; Lt J Wood; Lt J D Wordsworth.

Engineering: Lt A P Allen; Lt D L Bartlett; Lt A T J Betts; Lt P R Betts; Lt T Carey; Lt A J Cheal; Lt S J Church; Lt G T Clapham; Lt C D Cochrane; A/Lt Cdr L J Collins; Lt N Cripps; Lt H Davies; A/Lt Cdr B Dillon; Lt T R Dorman; Lt A J Duke; Lt J Dymond; Lt R J B Errington; Lt J Frost; Lt J E Gregory; Lt F M Griffiths; Lt I Guild; A/Lt Cdr A D Hale; Lt L E Harris; Lt F J Hayes; A/Lt Cdr R M Heaton; Lt R J Herrington; A/Lt Cdr M J Herzberg; Lt P R Hodges; A/Lt Cdr P Hollyfield; Lt J Howe; Lt C D T Ivory; Lt C D Jones; Lt B M Keane; Lt B Keenan; Lt J Kelway; Lt M A King; Lt M C R Kohealee; Lt E H Leckey; Lt M J Lister; Lt C D P Lucas; A/Lt Cdr M Magzoub; A/Lt Cdr K L Marlor; Lt A W McAllister; A/Lt Cdr A C McLachlan; Lt G Mullis; A/Lt Cdr P Newall; A/Lt Cdr J D Parker; Lt S T L Patton; Lt V H Percival; Lt K A Peterson; Lt J F Pritchick; Lt S Pike; Lt S L Raine; Lt D B Ritchie; Lt S Ross; Lt M J Rowbotham; Lt A C S Shakespeare; Lt C R Shaw; Lt M J Shirliff; Lt D Stafford-Shaw; Lt G C Stanistreet; Lt J G Tuhey; Lt I R Vowles; Lt J Walker; A/Lt Cdr L J Williams; Lt R H Wills.

Logistics: Lt P R Barker; Lt C A Carver; Lt P J Durbin; A/Lt Cdr C Feasey; A/Lt Cdr C S E Fleming; A/Lt Cdr S J Gowars MBE; Lt P B Hannaby; Lt E L Hawkins; Lt M C Howarth; A/Lt Cdr J Husband; Lt C M F Lees; Lt J W Owens; Lt L M Parker; Lt S J Plumer; Lt M I Rees; A/Lt Cdr G B Richards; Lt T D L Shaves; Lt H K Shaw; Lt R J Smith; Lt V L Stamper; Lt R D Thomas; Lt M J Toogood; Lt L J Wellington.

Royal Marines: Capt M Adams; A/Maj J C Apps; A/Maj S M Ashley; Capt T G Bacon; A/Maj N J Broadbent; Capt J D Buckley;

Capt M G Cart; Capt M A Cox MC; A/Maj P J Curtis MBE; Capt C J Emptage; Capt J K Garside; A/Maj J Gloak; A/Maj O W J Gray; A/Maj E W Hands; A/Maj M Heenan; Capt C G Hurt; Capt C C Magowan; A/Maj A Milne; Capt A G Morris; Capt C Moses; Capt A J Nixon; Capt S O'Sullivan; Capt D G Pyke; A/Maj M C Rand MBE; Capt S Reeves; A/Maj M A Sanderson; Capt M C Sharman; Capt J R Shelton; A/Maj T M Smith; Capt T G White; Capt T J Williams.

Medical Services: Lt M E Faye; A/Lt Cdr A J Tipping.

Medical Services: Lt D P Humphrey; Lt J M Martyn; Lt K M McCullough; Lt B J Swire; Lt T E Wardley.

Selections for promotion to Lt Cdr RNR and Major RMR; effective October 1 2014:

RNR: A/Lt Cdr S Armstrong; Lt P A L Barnes; Lt S Bellamy; A/Lt Cdr A C Bradley; Lt J Buchan; Lt S Cameron; A/Lt Cdr L Clarke; Lt S Dady; Lt R J Daly; A/Lt Cdr R A Dallamore; Lt N J Ealey; Lt B Ellison; Lt R A J Fitless; A/Lt Cdr R Fletcher; A/Lt Cdr R Gobey; Lt D Hayward-Rodgers; A/Lt Cdr S P Hearn; Lt K Hodgkinson-Walker; Lt S Holley; Lt C Jones; A/Lt Cdr K W Jones; Lt J Meropoulos; Lt J T Nisbet; A/Lt Cdr P O'Dooley; A/Lt Cdr L Paddock; Lt P Randles; Lt P A Ryan; Lt J Seton; Lt A Sigley; Lt M D Spencer; Lt J E H Taylor; Lt N H C Watts; Lt L Waudby; Lt J West; Lt S Wheeler.

RMR: A/Maj N W C Hale; Capt C J Kedward; Capt M C Williams.

Selections for promotion to Lt Col RM effective June 30 2014:

Maj F S Allan; Maj A Riston; A/Lt Col M J Churchward; Maj J E Delahay; Maj J A Dennis; Maj J M S Durup; A/Lt Col D R Ethell; A/Lt Col P S Fitzpatrick; Maj S A N Gray; A/Lt Col G M Green; Maj B E Halsted; A/Lt Col R M E Hopkins; Maj P C Morris; Maj J C Morton; A/Lt Col G C O'Hara; Maj T A Tarnowski; Maj S D Taylor; Maj O J Todd; A/Lt Col M T Twist; Maj R S Wallace.

Capt M G Cart; Capt M A Cox MC; A/Maj P J Curtis MBE; Capt C J Emptage; Capt J K Garside; A/Maj J Gloak; A/Maj O W J Gray; A/Maj E W Hands; A/Maj M Heenan; Capt C G Hurt; Capt C C Magowan; A/Maj A Milne; Capt A G Morris; Capt C Moses; Capt A J Nixon; Capt S O'Sullivan; Capt D G Pyke; A/Maj M C Rand MBE; Capt S Reeves; A/Maj M A Sanderson; Capt M C Sharman; Capt J R Shelton; A/Maj T M Smith; Capt T G White; Capt T J Williams.

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Ask Jack

Lt Cdr James Rutherford 737 NAS Sqn 20 Course Apr-Aug 1961. I am searching for a picture in an article of a Naval Base, HMS Albion or Lossiemouth newspaper, showing my father, Lt Cdr Jim Rutherford, with eight others including Lts Brown, Williams, Van der Plank, Dathan and Wise in FFA gear with flight helmets under arm or held in relaxed pose, smiling with cockpit open. Contact Fiona Rutherford on 01736 361287.

HMS Exeter December 1933. While clearing out my grandmother's house I found a circular plaque with the words *Order of the Old Sea Dog, HMS Exeter December 1933*. I assume it was given to my grandfather Cdr A C R Duval or it could have been given to Lt E Finch-Noyes. Can anyone shed light on this? Contact Richard Duval at seventhangel@hotmail.co.uk

Brickwood Field Gun 2004: David Thurman competed in the competition at HMS Raleigh in 2004 but has no photos – can anyone help? Ring 07894263444 or email davidthurman@hotmail.co.uk

Sports lottery

February 15: £5,000 – Mne S Billings; £1,800 – WO2 P Clark; £800 – PO J Keatley; £600 – PO L Rowe; £500 – Mne D Holcombe; £400 – Lt Cdr C Morgan.

February 22: £5,000 – Lt Cdr T Grimley; £1,800 – AB L Glynn; £800 – AB B Cotton; £600 – AB M J Dodds; £500 – AB A Holmes; £400 – Mne J Humphrey.

March 2: £5,000 – Capt T Addison; £1,800 – AB G Robertson; £800 – Mne L Welsman; £600 – AB I Hazell; £500 – Mne D Wright; £400 – PO J Marshall.

March 8: £5,000 – Cdr D W Giles; £1,80



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Just click on 'Public Job Search', select 'Ministry of Defence' in the Department field and then 'Programme & Project Management' in the Job Category field.

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Job Opportunity

The Perfect Aide-de-Camp (London Based)

The principal of a privately owned international investment group is seeking to appoint a highly motivated, competent individual to join his team of committed professional managers.

With business interests that currently reach across the European Union, North America and Canada, the Organisation now has ambitions to grow further, successfully undertaking projects and trading opportunities around the World and this opportunity will only be suited to a high performing, self starter.

There is a role for a capable, strong, highly motivated and well organised support player with appropriate experience, possessing a good command of the English language who is also numerate to join the Organisation as a personal aide to one of the Company's principals.

The successful candidate will be required to demonstrate their ability through a process of rigorous selection.

The pace and requirements of this post are extremely demanding with expectations beyond normal criteria. The commitment required is total and the position will only suit a highly dedicated individual, possessing a positive achiever's attitude, willing and prepared, if necessary at short notice, to accompany their employer on projects anywhere in the world.

The position available offers an opportunity for a highly skilled, broadly experienced and professionally accomplished personal assistant to act as an aide-de-camp for one of the business principals.

Tasks will include diary management, event coordination, management of records, gate keeping, general executive support, facilities management, oversight team coordination, arranging, initiating and managing projects together with accompanying senior executives on overseas trips. Driving the Principal and colleagues will be a routine element of the job. A vehicle will be supplied and a clean license is required.

Capable of operating effectively under pressure at all times, the individual chosen will be able to demonstrate loyalty with integrity, the ability to use their own initiative and at appropriate times lead and be accountable for specific projects of group activity. The individual will report directly to the one of the owner managers in a personal support capacity to deliver far ranging assignments.

This position is not for the faint hearted but for someone who relishes a challenge, wants more than the predictability offered by a regular job, is excited at each day's prospects and will be committed to deliver at the highest level.

Suitable applicants, ideally with a second language, will have developed their skills over a number of years, in like roles at other similarly based organisations and who feel they can command a highly competitive salary.

Applicants are asked to confirm that they:- Have a UK Passport. Have a clean Driving License. Are willing to travel and stay overseas. Reside within 1 hours commute time of central London. Have significant experience in a similar role.

Interested individuals should in the first instance send a CV to :- r.havill@btinternet.com



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(dependent on skills and experience)

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) is at the forefront of the digital revolution in maritime navigation and the organisation behind the highly successful Admiralty brand. We provide comprehensive world coverage of navigational charts and publications, digital products and services to the mariner, international shipping and our Defence customer.

We need Navigation Specialists to provide navigational and maritime guidance to Production Teams within UKHO. Using excellent judgement, combined with extensive sea-going experience, you will produce safe, accurate, clear, comprehensive, timely and up-to-date volumes of sailing directions to mariners for the maritime customer.

Your key role is to assess and verify new information, including Foreign Government Hydrographic Office charts and Sailing Directions, photographic views and reports of survey from HM Ships and contract companies; updating databases and products accordingly. In addition to this, you will be required to produce Notice to Mariners to update Sailing Directions, liaise with and advise internal colleagues and liaise externally with Harbour Masters and Port Companies as appropriate.


The MoD is an Equal Opportunities employer and seeks to reflect the diverse community it serves. Applications are welcome from anyone who meets the stated requirements.



To be successful, you must hold a Deck Officer Certificate of Competence or a seagoing Royal Navy/Merchant Navy equivalent qualification. With practical navigational experience on an international scale, you will be a strong communicator with the ability to distinguish significant information from data presented and keep accurate records of the actions taken. Excellent IT skills, including experience of MS Suite packages, are essential.

This is a UKHO non-reserved post for which applicants must be British citizens, citizens of the Irish Republic, a Commonwealth state, or EEA nationals. Successful applicants will require security clearance; you will therefore need to have resided in the UK for a minimum of 5 years.

Please visit www.ukho.gov.uk for an information sheet and an application form. Alternatively, you can contact the Recruitment Team at the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, Admiralty Way, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 2DN.
Tel: +44 (0)1823 723353.
Email: recruitment@ukho.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is 30th April 2014.



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MIL: (94649) 2916

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Big changes for Dukies

A BUSY autumn term has transferred over to the Lent term at The Duke of York's Royal Military School.

After being thrilled that our military band played at Twickenham for the England versus Argentina international rugby match, the school was invited to play a fanfare at an important World War 1 commemorative service held in Folkestone and featured on a BBC Radio Kent broadcast.

The military band's next excursion is to play at the Menin Gate when a large contingent from the school will pay tribute to former Dukies whose names are recorded on the memorial.

The school ski trip took place at half-term, enabling students to hone their skills on the slopes with expert guidance. At the end of Lent term is the adventurous training week in Devon, where students will get involved in many activities, have fun, learn new skills and enjoy an outdoor experience.

The school's £24.9 million building programme is now more than half complete, with the new sports hall, Year 12 boarding house and East Teaching Wing being finished and opened at the beginning of January.

These new facilities are already having a great impact on the school, improving class and sports facilities (*the first netball game in the new sports hall is pictured below*).

Building work is well under way to complete all new facilities in September, with new junior boarding accommodation, new interiors in the existing boarding houses and the West Teaching Block all due to be finished at the start of the new academic year.

Our students performed exceptionally well in their GCSE exams last year, putting us in the top 100 non-selective state schools in the country – as confirmed by Schools Minister David Laws in a letter sent to the executive principal in February.



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- Our military ethos, ceremonial parades and Combined Cadet Force will help your child to develop essential life skills including character and resilience.
- They will enjoy an active lifestyle with sport, music, drama and activities all playing a key role while studying for their GCSEs and A Levels.
- Every student is actively encouraged to **achieve the very best they can** - developing their self-confidence, teamwork and leadership skills while living and studying in a friendly and supportive community.

Our fees are £3,500 per term (£10,500 per year)* If you qualify for CEA, you will pay just over £1,000 per year. You are welcome to visit us for a hosted tour.



This is a Dukie community, we look out for one another

www.doyrms.com
admin.office@doyrms.com
Tel: 01304 245073

* Our fees are reviewed annually



Life outdoors is the key

PERROTT Hill is a thriving country preparatory school with a flourishing Pre-Prep and Montessori Nursery.

It is situated in beautiful grounds upon the Somerset-Dorset border and the phrase 'time and space for a full education' is at the very heart of all that happens at the school.

Children enjoy access to the 28 acres of woods and grounds during breaks, play times, games and activities such as forest school outdoor learning.

The forest school movement is well established and complements Perrott Hill's ethos of allowing children room to develop within a safe environment.

Our pupils revel in this exciting weekly activity, and research shows that it enhances their independence and self-esteem.

They acquire fantastic life skills such as safe fire lighting and the correct use of tools. Learning outdoors enriches the curriculum and the children blossom in an environment where all success is celebrated.

At Perrott Hill, the Montessori Nursery and Pre-Prep pupils enjoy many forest school activities including shelter building, clay oven cooking, fire building, studies of habitats, plant and animal identification, rope tying, sculpture making, natural art, storytelling, coppicing and growing saplings.

Above all Perrott Hill children thrive in a 'classroom without walls'.

For further details or to arrange a visit call 01460 72051 or email admissions@perrotthill.com.



Historic foundations for a bright future

BOARDING at the Prebendal School is an extremely rewarding experience where our children become self-sufficient, independent and passionate learners.

As the oldest school in Sussex, we are proud of our history and tradition, combining our established reputation in the South of England with a modern approach to teaching and preparing our pupils for a range of leading senior schools.

We are a family-orientated school that caters to every child's individual needs and boarding can be full, weekly or flexi.

There are ample opportunities for our boarders to visit many breathtaking city, country and coastal attractions while Chichester itself is a beautiful city, renowned for its heritage and enclosed in ancient city walls.

As an exclusive boarding community, we have the flexibility to arrange outings and trips for either the day or the weekend and we are easily able to transport our boarders from near to far.

We provide a safe and secure boarding environment for Armed



Forces children with first-class pastoral care and a broad and challenging curriculum.

Every year a large proportion of our Year 8 pupils achieve an academic or music scholarship to a leading senior school and we have an impressive 100 per cent record of all our 13-year-olds achieving a place at their first-choice school.

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answer any of your questions.

Our admissions secretary, Lesa Burchell, can be contacted on 01243 520970 or by emailing secretary.prebendal@btconnect.com.

You can also find out more by visiting our website, www.prebendschool.org.uk.

We hope to welcome you soon and that your family will be able to experience just how special our boarding is.



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All-action inspection for Trinity cadets

RESIDENTS in the New Road area of Teignmouth had their lunchtime peace broken by the roar of a Royal Navy Search and Rescue helicopter from 771 NAS as it circled overhead and manoeuvred into position above Trinity School.

The Sea King (pictured right) was paying a visit to Trinity as part of a day of activities to mark the school's highly-acclaimed Combined Cadet Force biennial inspection.

The helicopter had been exercising with Teignmouth RNLI's crew that day, a crew which includes Robert Larkman, a senior PE teacher and Head of Key Stage 4 at Trinity; he was at the helm during the helicopter winching exercises.

Earlier in the day the school had been delighted to welcome Lt Col J F Kitson as a reviewing officer for the inspection. Col Kitson is the Commanding Officer of Exeter University

Officer Training Corps, which is based in Wyvern Barracks, Exeter.

He was accompanied by Officer Cadet Leila Jones, who was thrilled to be returning to Trinity, having been head girl in 2009-2010. Leila was a member of the RN section of Trinity CCF for five years and is now studying law at Plymouth University.

The Review team went to SeaSports RYA Training Centre in New Quay Street to observe cadets of the RN Section engaged in afloat training.

The colonel was driven off the Back Beach in a safety RIB by Cadet AB Diggory Puyal; Diggory gained his RYA Powerboat Level 2 qualification during the Easter holidays when he attended a CCF course at HMS Raleigh, Cornwall.

Back at school Col Kitson toured the CCF HQ and then drove to Woodbury Common to meet the Army Section, who had deployed there earlier in the morning.

Under the guidance of Cadet C/Sgt Sohail Ghani and Cadet Sgt John Wordsworth, senior cadets Acting Sgt Marcus Moore, Callum Reade and Jon Rowe instructed cadets from Year 9 and Year 10 in military skills such as patrolling, improvised shelter building and an observation lane.

"The result of the inspection will be known in the very near future," said headmaster Tim Waters, "but whatever the outcome, we have been delighted by the commitment, enthusiasm and skills demonstrated by our cadets during the inspection."

"We are determined to maintain Trinity's position amongst the most highly-regarded CCF contingents in the whole of the UK."

"We say this not simply because of the prestige that such acclaim brings to Trinity and to Teignmouth, but because we know how much our students gain as individuals from their involvement in CCF."

A school with the Navy at its heart



Greenwich Hospital.

A great deal has changed since then. The school admitted non-seafarers for the first time in 1990 and, a year later, girls, but even today there are still more than 300 pupils claiming the Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) or in receipt of a means-tested seafaring bursary as a result of their connections with the Royal Navy or Royal Marines.

Every year the choir performs at the National Seafarers' Service at St Paul's Cathedral and at the Admiralty Carol Service in St Martin-in-the-Fields. Trafalgar Night is a key date on the school calendar and celebrated in fine style.

As recently as 60 years ago all

junior houses aimed at helping younger pupils to settle in and to ease the transition into senior school.

As a result of these firm foundations, the Royal Hospital School has grown to become a forward-thinking educational establishment that turns out balanced, well-educated young people with a set of values of which any parent or future employer would be proud.

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Perrott Hill's Independent Schools Inspectorate Report October 2013 was outstanding, with the top mark of 'Excellent' awarded in each and every category. We encourage you to read the Tatler Schools Guide 2014 and the Good Schools Guide reports which capture the values and ethos of this flourishing co-educational boarding school.

Perrott Hill, North Perrott, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7SL 01460 72051 | www.perrotthill.com | headmaster@perrotthill.com

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Disaster in the damned Dardanelles

THE attempt to knock the Ottoman Empire out of World War 1 in 1915 – which has gone down in history as the Gallipoli campaign – is not one of the great feats of Allied arms.

The bungled landings on the Gallipoli peninsula – with the aim of advancing on Istanbul 150 miles away and forcing the Ottoman rulers to surrender – have been the subject of a myriad of books, as well as TV programmes and the big screen.

But Michael Forrest's *The Defence of the Dardanelles: From Bombards to Battleships (Pen and Sword, £25 ISBN 978-1781-590522)* is the story of Gallipoli before Gallipoli, if you like: what the British and French Navies did to try to force the strait and sail right up to the

Bosphorus, without the need to put any boots on the ground.

To be more accurate, the author's study is a history of the defences of the Dardanelles and the failed attempts by the guns of the Fleet to knock them out.

First British and French battleships tried to subdue the forts in Gallipoli and Asia Minor guarding the two-mile wide gateway to the Dardanelles.

Then a sizeable Anglo-French flotilla – more than a dozen pre-dreadnoughts and dreadnoughts, including the brand new HMS Queen Elizabeth – were sent into the narrows on March 18 1915.

In doing so, Allied leaders sent their warships into a patch of water of perhaps ten square miles, never more than a couple of miles from the shore, and surrounded by Turkish guns on three sides. Worse still, the Turks

had mined the strait.

The naval artillery – especially the 15in shells of the Queen Elizabeth – had a tremendous moral effect, and wiped out a lot of the defenders' communications. They did not silence the Turkish forts, however.

And the toll was fearful. The obsolete HMS Ocean and Irresistible both sank after hitting mines.

The worst fate befell the aged French battleship Bouvet which either hit a mine or was struck by a heavy shell which detonated her magazine. She turned turtle and sank inside two minutes, taking 660 of the 710 souls aboard with her.

With hindsight, the attempt to force Turkey to leave the war

using a dozen or so ships alone seems naïve and cavalier at best, a wilful sacrifice of lives at worst – losing a few obsolete warships in the Dardanelles wouldn't tip the balance of naval power elsewhere in Europe.

Had the extremely cautious (and not especially healthy) RN commander, the wonderfully-named Sackville Carden, pressed the issue in November 1914 after the initial bombardments, he may have forced

the narrows, reached the Sea of Marmara and threatened Istanbul.

He didn't. The Turks and their German allies used the winter to bolster their defences. "By

March 1915," the author writes, "the Dardanelles were shut and sealed."

This is an excellent, and very welcome, addition to the copious literature on the campaign, making full use of English, French and Turkish sources (published and unpublished) and copiously illustrated with images then and now.

The only minor quibble is a lack of references – but that's more for the serious historian who wishes to delve further.

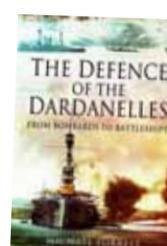
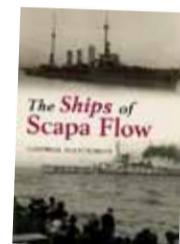
■ Did your relatives serve with the Royal Navy at Gallipoli? If so, we're interested in their story.

The centenary of the assault on the Dardanelles is one of two milestone events today's Royal Navy will be marking as part of the 100th anniversary of the Great War (the other will be Jutland in 2016).

We're looking for first-hand accounts – letters and memoirs – of the campaign from Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel (including the Royal Naval Division) as part of the Senior Service's commemorations, including a memorial supplement in *Navy News* next year.

We are also teaming up with Mr Forrest, who's now compiling a book on the RN's role in the 1915 campaign, and will pass on your submissions to him with your permission.

If you are able to help, send your accounts to edit@navynews.co.uk or Gallipoli Campaign, Navy News, Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.



The birth of amphibious ops

THE GROVE REVIEW

IN RECENT years the Royal Marines have become central to the capabilities of Britain's naval forces.

Carriers have been converted to operate as landing ships. The Response Force Task Group, the Navy's most important single unit, is an amphibious force. Central to this amphibious capability are the Royal Marines, whose origins are addressed in an excellent and important book published last year.

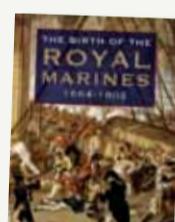
Britt Zerbe is an American who did his PhD at Exeter on the origins of the Royal Marines and their development until 1802 when they became officially 'Royal'.

The story is not quite what has been traditionally accepted. Although the first 'marine regiments' were raised in 1664, these were repeatedly formed and disbanded and were only sometimes under the full control of the Admiralty. The rivalry between the Army and Navy over them is reminiscent of the more recent controversies between the RAF and Navy over control of naval aviation.

Then in 1755 it all changed. A 'marine corps' was formed under Admiralty control which has lasted to this day. Zerbe provides a magnificently detailed and comprehensive account of the development of this force, examining administration and manpower, as well as their functions in policing ships and developing an 'operational doctrine' for fighting both at sea and from the sea.

Particularly interesting is the discussion of the use of the marines in sea battles, using their musketry to clear enemy upper decks and also directing their fire to enemy gunports. Marines did not form part of boarding parties, but were used to repel enemy bordings. One can see why Naval officers were often reluctant to send marines ashore for land operations.

Nevertheless capabilities were soon developed to land marines in flat-bottomed boats, the use of normal ships' boats having proved problematical in earlier attacks. The marines' special capabilities and training were often vital in amphibious warfare. As today, their specialisation in amphibious operations was crucial. They proved useful in a range of operations as an Imperial 'rapid reaction force' in both



peacetime and wartime contingencies.

It is interesting to see how the marines' special relationship with the Falkland Islands developed from the first use of marines to garrison Port Egmont in 1766 to the crisis of 1770-1, which saw expansion and reorganisation of the Marine Corps with a Colonel Commandant appointed to each of the Marine Divisions at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham. In 1982, the vital role of the Royal Marines in the Falklands War helped confirm their survival in a hostile Whitehall environment.

The author argues convincingly that the role and importance of the marines has been ignored by both military and naval historians, the sea soldiers having fallen between their concerns. He has done an important job in providing a detailed and revisionist account that gives a new understanding of the development of this vital corps in its formative years.

The Birth of the Royal Marines by Britt Zerbe (The Boydell Press, £60 ISBN 978-1-84383-837-1) is well produced – as it ought to be for its price. It is such an important volume that one hopes a paperback edition might be produced.

In this earlier period, the complexities of amphibious operations sometimes resulted in failure and this was also the case in World War 2. One of the most egregious amphibious failures of that conflict was the raid on Tobruk which took place in

September 1942. The aim was to destroy the port as a base for the Axis forces before the opening of the Alamein offensive.

The concept grew from a small-scale raid to destroy the fuel storage tanks at the port to a complex operation using special forces, commandos, Army troops, Royal Marines, warships and aircraft. Operation Agreement intended to capture Tobruk for 24 hours to destroy harbour installations, sink ships in the harbour, destroy gunnery emplacements and release Allied prisoners – as well as destroying the fuel tanks.

It all ended in fiasco. The destroyers HMS Sikh and Zulu were both sunk, along with the anti-aircraft cruiser Coventry. Stragglers took months to return via the desert.

This tragic story is recounted in *Tobruk:*



● Where did you get that hat?... A portrait of one of Fox's Marines – one of six regiments named after their colonels – who fought in the War of the Spanish Succession, including the capture and defence of Gibraltar in 1704.

Painting by Charles Stadden courtesy of the Royal Marines Museum

A Raid Too Far by David Jefferson (Robert Hale, £18.99 ISBN 978-0-7090-9298-9). The book is quite a wide-ranging survey of the origins of the special forces employed in the operation, notably the Long Range Desert Group.

The sad story of various previous problems and difficulties with these units

did not fill one with much confidence as to the prospects of success for the Tobruk raid. One cannot help but feel that the British proclivity for such units was, perhaps unsurprisingly, not reflected in operational and strategic success.

The book is well produced with good illustrations and is very good value.

Scapa capers

IN THE final years of the 19th Century up until roughly the end of the Great War, the cheapest and easiest way for the public to collect photographs was the postcard.

Pretty much every aspect of life was recorded by photographers and published – and the world's greatest navy (and its sailors) was an obvious subject matter.

Campbell McCutcheon's *The Ships of Scapa Flow* (Amberley, £14.99 ISBN 978-1445-633762) makes extensive use of collections produced by Orkney postcard publishers as well as contemporary photographs (private and official) to give an insight into the goings on at the home of the Grand Fleet between 1914 and 1919.

The surrender of the German High Seas Fleet at the war's end was an event unparalleled in naval history – and covered *in extenso* by the photographers of the day.

And once interred in the natural harbour, the surrendered German ships – 'the Hun Fleet' as one 1918 postcard put it – proved to be a significant tourist attraction and draw for folk with cameras.

As did the massive salvage operation when the Germans scuttled their ships in June 1919; it took 20 years to raise the hulk fleet.

The real gems in this slim paperback volume – which reproduces more than 130 images in the sepia tone of the era – however, are the photos you very rarely come across – what McCutcheon calls 'the phantom fleet'.

Two squadrons of mock battleships – canvas and wood built around the hulls of old liners – were created in a matter of months and would not just anchor at Scapa, but also sail around the islands and, in the case of the faux HMS Queen Mary, the 'battle-cruiser's' presence was noted by the media when she sailed to the USA to shadow German raiders in 1915.

Prestigious awards for Cardiff trio

THREE members of Cardiff unit received honours at the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan's awards ceremony, held at the Maindy Barracks complex in the Welsh capital.

First up was PPO Sue Griffiths, TS Cardiff's Logistics Officer.

Sue received the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate of Merit for the sterling work she has done over the past five years or so in turning what appeared to be a jumble-sale warehouse into the unit's super-efficient loan clothing store.

Her citation also noted that her cheery disposition was always remarked upon by her superiors when she attended SCC courses.

Second to be honoured with the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate of Merit was Mike Davies – former chairman of the unit's Parents and Friends Association and currently the Unit Management Committee's treasurer – for all the work he had done behind the scenes at the unit.

This included resurrecting the then-dormant PFA and turning it into a vibrant and efficient charity fundraising team, and doing vital DIY work at the unit whenever required.

Finally, LC Olivia Stickland was appointed Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for 2014 in recognition of the outstanding contribution she had made to the unit.

Olivia holds the distinction of being the only cadet in TS Cardiff's history to have been a member of its field gun crew in every year she has been a cadet, from ages ten through 17.

She is also the gun crew's most successful captain thus far, having led her team to an unprecedented clean sweep of the Portsmouth Area Volunteer Cadet Corps Invitation Trophy and all three of the City of Cardiff National Armed Forces Day Field Gun Competition trophies in 2013.

Steely show in Sheffield

STAFF and cadets from South Yorkshire District held a highly successful Mass Activity Cadet Training (MACT) weekend at Sheffield unit at the start of the year.

Cadets were instructed and tested over the weekend in a range of subjects including rigging and ropework, first aid and mechanical engineering.

The results were outstanding, with all cadets passing their exams, giving the unit a 100 per cent success rate.

The MACT is the first one of the year for the district and provided the cadets with a good benchmark for the rest of the year.

Officer in Charge PO (SCC) Chris Knapton said: "All the staff and cadets that have attended over the weekend have had a really good time and have gained valuable qualifications towards their development."

More training weekends are planned for the rest of the year and a full programme of other activities, such as sailing, power-boating, kayaking and adventure training are going to keep the staff and cadets busy.

"The arrival of the new Trinity 500 will be a welcome boost to the current stock of boats currently used by the cadets."

Sheffield is undergoing a period of expansion, with an influx of new staff and cadets and plenty of hard work being put in by the recently-appointed chairperson Teresa Smith.



CADETS from the Malta GC unit were guests of the Captain and ship's company of HMS Daring when the ship was in Grand Harbour on her way back to home waters.

Three days beforehand the ship's helicopter, part of 815 Naval Air Squadron, had flown to Luqa Airport to pick up Acting PO (SCC) Dylan Seychell and Marine Cadet Luca Attard to fly them onboard the Type 45 destroyer, where they spent the night as guests of the squadron.

The Malta unit is affiliated

to the squadron, and this is the third time that 815 has taken personnel from TS St Paul on board a warship.

PO Seychell and MC Attard entered Grand Harbour with the ship the following morning.

A group of Sea Cadets and staff from Westerham unit, under the command of OIC CPO (SCC) Jan Dean, happened to be in Malta for a visit and they were invited by the Malta unit to join in the tour of the ship (pictured left) before visiting TS St Paul that same evening.

Praise for swimmers from mayor

THE Mayor of Poole has congratulated Lilliput Sea Scouts swimming team on their success during the RN national Sea Scouts swimming championships at HMS Raleigh.

The annual event attracts more than 200 RN Sea Scouts, Leaders and Explorer Sea Scouts from 25 groups around the UK.

The six members of the Lilliput team were Daisy Gallimore, Tom Ward, James Hedley (U12s) and Louisa Kitcatt, Beatrice Reed, William Reed (U14s).

And the team came away with trophies and good performances, including winner overall Scout U12 silver salver; first in the lifesaving line-throwing race; first in the U12 medley relay; third in the whole squadron relay; three scouts came fourth in their individual stroke finals and three scouts were in the top eight in their individual heats.

The team met Poole's Mayor, Cllr Philip Eades, in his parlour, where he congratulated them on their performance.

Lt Cdr David Gray, RN Staff Officer Sea Scouts, said: "The Royal Navy wants to inspire youth to achieve and we saw plenty of achievement from the Lilliput Sea Scouts at the Swimming Gala.

Their determination and commitment to the team overcame some very strong competition.

"Although rightly revelling in their own success, I was also hugely impressed by their sportsmanship and genuine appreciation and whole-hearted support of the weaker swimming teams."

Activities in the picture

ARE you a dab hand with a camera?

Show your skill and creativity to be in with a chance to win the Sea Cadet Amateur Open Category Award in the Royal Navy's prestigious Peregrine Trophy competition.

The winning photographer will receive an all-expenses paid trip to London to attend the awards ceremony, an offshore voyage, £100 worth of Sea Cadet shop vouchers for their unit, and their winning image will appear in *Navy News* and on the RN website.

Judges will be looking for photographs of a Sea Cadet or RMC theme or activity that combines technical excellence, creativity and impact.

The photos can be in black-and-white or full colour, and can be from a film or digital camera.

Photographs entered in the competition will not be returned and may be used in the media, publications and online.

A maximum of three prints per person may be submitted.

For more information, see www.sccheadquarters.com/rn-peregrine-trophy

Southern soccer

CADETS from Southern Area missed out on the honours at the national five-a-side football tournament at RAF Cranwell.

The senior girls team, from Eastbourne unit, fought their way through to the finals but were beaten into second place by a strong team from South West.

The senior boys team from Herne Bay and Ramsgate units played well but missed out on the medals, as did the junior boys team from Eastbourne and the junior girls from Brighton.

Adults from Southern Area, including Area Officer Cdr John Greene, travelled north to assist with the event as referees and support staff.



Bronze Wing is a golden opportunity

THE Sea Cadet Aviation team has put another dozen candidates through another successful Bronze Wing aviation course – though their air experience flights had to be delayed until later this year.

More than 60 cadets applied to attend this year's course at SCTC Weymouth and RNAS Yeovilton, and after a rigorous selection process 12 were eventually invited to attend the week's ground school.

The course has been refined

over the past few years by Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RMR and his team of four instructors, who introduce the cadets to a variety of subjects including principles of flight, human factors, aviation law, radiotelephony and meteorology plus time on the course flight simulators, which helps to prepare the students for their first air experience flights later in the week.

After successful completion of their ground school examination the cadets travelled to 727 Naval Air Squadron at Yeovilton, which provides grading and acquaint flights for both Royal Navy and Royal Marines trainee pilots using their fleet of five Grob Tutors.

Unfortunately the extreme weather that day prevented any flights for the cadets but the Navy pulled out all the stops and Operations Officer Lt Dave Forest and Sub Lt Rob Prior were able to produce a varied and interesting programme for the course that included a visit to their hangar to familiarise the students with the Grob Tutor followed by a guided tour of the new control tower and Fleet Air Arm museum.

Translating for the bear, PO Devereux reported to the ship's company that he had thoroughly enjoyed his visit, despite being picked up for having oil stains on his overalls by Training Officer, CMEM(M) John Callaghan.

He then thanked the CO for a good insight into the Corps before departing in his ex-police panda car for his next adventure.

Once in position the guard and band were inspected by Lady Darnley, Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, and the Commanding Officer of HMS Ledbury, Lt Cdr Simon Pressdee.



Bear mettle

THE Merchant Navy has a number of young bears working within its ranks that visit ships and training establishments throughout Britain to promote the organisation.

At the invitation of the CO CWEM(O) Michael Dixon and Merchant Navy officer (and TS Cardiff PO) Helen Devereux, one of these little ambassadors decided to drop in on Cardiff unit to see what the unit's cadets get up to on a scheduled parade night.

First Lieutenant CPO(MW) Dave Messer was surprised at Colours to discover that he had a bear behind...

However, the furry visitor just wanted to take part in the ceremony and duly fell in with the cadets, turning smartly in time with the rest of the squad to face the mainmast when ordered.

At the invitation of the CO he helped at the Colours ceremony, and with the help of JCdt Denise

Cohen raised the Sea Cadet ensign correctly (pictured above).

The bear then joined the Enrolled Cadets for the first lesson period, which took in seamanship and meteorology, and after a paws for stand-easy, he then joined up with PO Allison Ward's Junior (shouldn't that be cub?) Cadet Division to make knot boards out of cake and liquorice.

Translating for the bear, PO Devereux reported to the ship's company that he had thoroughly enjoyed his visit, despite being picked up for having oil stains on his overalls by Training Officer, CMEM(M) John Callaghan.

He then thanked the CO for a good insight into the Corps before departing in his ex-police panda car for his next adventure.

More information on the Merchant Navy Bears project can be found on Facebook (Merchant Navy Bears) and on twitter (@MN_Bears).

MEMBERS of Ross and Monmouth unit travelled to Ledbury to support the crew of HMS Ledbury on their Freedom parade in the town.

They were joined by a contingent from Hereford unit, Royal British Legion standard bearers and local Army cadets.

The parade formed up in Lawnside Road car park and, led by the Royal Marines Band Plymouth, marched into the town centre behind the Colour party and guard.

Whilst at the reception the cadets took the opportunity to swap cap tallies with the ship's company.

Supporters of freedom

On completion Lady Darnley inspected the Sea Cadets, led by Lt (SCC) Adrian Gittens RNR.

After speeches by Lady Darnley, the Mayor of Ledbury Cllr Terry Widdows and Lt Cdr Pressdee, the ship exercised its freedom, heading to the top of town then returning to salute at the dais before going to the community centre for refreshments.

Lt Gittens said: "It was great to renew our relationship with the ship's company and I am extremely proud of the cadets on parade today, particularly as I am a Ledbury boy."

Adults from Southern Area, including Area Officer Cdr John Greene, travelled north to assist with the event as referees and support staff.



• Sgt Ann Miller with Cdt Kitty D'Almaire

Cadets help Seafarers' fundraising

RICKMANSWORTH and Watford unit supported Seafarers UK and the Royal Marines Band Collingwood to raise valuable funds for people who earn their living from the sea, such as fishermen, and those who work on the sea, such as the men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

The Royal Marines Band, conducted by Director of Music Maj Pete Curtis, played well-known and popular pieces of music to a very appreciative audience.

The eight Sea Cadets and three adult volunteer instructors helped to raise an impressive £1,055 for the Seafarers UK charity by selling souvenir programmes, by selling flags during the interval for the finale and by supporting collection buckets as the audience departed the venue – the Watford Colosseum.



The band plays on

TORBAY unit are proud of their band – but their instruments were getting past their sell-by date and defective, especially the drums.

The unit approached Brixham branch of the Royal Naval Association seeking help – and the shipmates were glad to see what they could do.

As a result, the band was provided with new drums and RNA branch chairman S/M Joe Fleming presented a cheque for £980 to the unit's Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Steve Skingle RNR (above).

Also pictured with the cadets are S/Ms Paul Fitzgerald, the branch treasurer, and Jack Hind.

Long service is rewarded

TWO long-serving senior officers from Southern Area Sea Cadets were presented with their 50 year service certificates at a ceremony held at HMS Sultan.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Phil Coast RNR and Lt Cdr (SCC) Peter Gooding RNR were presented with their certificates by the Captain Sea Cadets Capt Jonathan Holloway at the Southern Area Annual Conference.

Both Peter and Phil joined the Corps at the tender age of 12 and have served in various capacities ever since.

Phil started as a Cadet at Ashford unit, progressing through the ranks and ending up as Commanding Officer.

He then moved on to become District Officer for East Kent, followed by a few years as Area

Chatham dig in for Gibraltar Cup glory



• A Royal Marines Cadet pushes through the mud during the Gibraltar Cup competition at Lympstone

ALMOST 50 people took part in the toughest competition in the Royal Marines Cadets' calendar – and it was Chatham who came away with the honours.

Teams representing the six areas gathered at the Commando Training Centre RM in Lympstone, Devon, over a weekend early last month to compete for the Gibraltar Cup.

Detachments work hard all year to obtain the highest scores at the Cadet Annual Training, Safety and Efficiency Appraisal, accompanied with good reports at unit reviews and Royal Naval Parades, to be given the honour of competing in the competition.

RMC detachments train with all their might just to take part, let alone win.

Hardy cadets and volunteers brave the winter months to prepare for the event, which aims to identify the best all-round Royal Marines Cadets Detachment.

During the competition they are tested to their limits and assessed by serving Royal Marines.

They have to navigate their way across moorland and demonstrate a variety of military skills, such as camouflage, observation and leadership.

Cadets arrived on the Friday full of enthusiasm and excitement.

Their first challenge was a written test on the Sea Cadet Corps history and knowledge, but the physical exertions started the following day at 8.30am at Woodbury Common, when they had to self-navigate, carry out first aid for emergency scenarios, and cross a river stance (without a river underneath...)

After a bite to eat, they were given tasks of map-reading, and a command problem involving buckets, rope and lots of stones – the stance supervisor commented that he was extremely impressed with their performance.

On Sunday, the final day of the competition, cadets were sliding down the commando slide, and taking part in a tough assault course, running in a team with a heavy log and pushing a Land Rover up a steep hill – made that bit more difficult by the wind and rain.

Final placings were: 1st – Chatham (Southern – 363 points); 2nd – Bristol Adventure (South West – 325); 3rd – Lincoln (Eastern – 317); 4th – Kingston (London – 316); 5th – South Shields (Northern – 306); 6th – Rochdale (North West – 262). The Section Commander Trophy went to Cdt Sgt Smith, South Shields.

Veterans receive medals

WORLD War 2 veteran sailors Lewis Trinder, 89, and John French, 88, received their Arctic Star medals at a parade at Camberley unit.

The pair took part in the Arctic Convoys that carried vital supplies from the Western Allies to the hard-pressed Soviet Union – a task famously described by Winston Churchill as “the worst journey in the world”.

No separate award was issued at the time for service in this campaign, but after a review the government last year issued the Arctic Star.

This was presented by Cdr Graham Turnbull, Chief of Staff to the Naval Regional Commander Eastern England, to Lew and John at the annual prize-giving parade of TS Diadem.

Lew, the vice president of the unit, was a wartime seaman who volunteered for the Navy on his 18th birthday and spent most of the next four years at sea.

He was in several convoys in the North Atlantic during 1943 and 1944, the last of which six



• From left: Cdr Graham Turnbull, Lewis Trinder and John French

German U-boats were sunk.

In March 1944, serving in HMS Magpie, he was in the largest and last of the Arctic Convoys taking supplies to Murmansk.

They were heavily attacked by U-boats but destroyed four

of them. He then served in the D-Day Landings and after leaving the Navy as a petty officer, was for many years a respected member of the licensed trade in Aldershot.

When he retired, he joined the staff of the Sea Cadet Corps and instructed many cadets at the Farnham and Camberley units.

John joined the Navy on his 18th birthday and in 1943 served as Quartermaster in HMS Berwick and later in HMS Poppy, both on the convoys.

He returned to civilian life in 1948 and worked for an engineering company.

He is chairman of the Camberley RNA branch, which has strong links with the unit.

Presenting the medals, Cdr Turnbull said it was a great honour for him to do so.

As part of the ceremony, two Cadets told the audience of parents and supporters about the Arctic Convoys and how the sailors, both in the merchant ships and their naval escorts, faced great hardship from the bitter weather above the Arctic Circle and constant attacks from German U-boats and aircraft.

The two veterans, proudly wearing their other decorations and distinctive white Arctic Convoy Association berets, then gave out unit trophies.

Mr Trinder said that receiving his medal at the unit was a particular honour as he had been CO at the unit, and the ship after which it was named – HMS Diadem – had been with his own on the Arctic Convoys.

Mr French spoke of the ‘brilliant lads’ who had served in the Royal Navy with him and the comradeship of the Service, which was second to none.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Kevin Milligan RNR, the District Officer, read messages sent to Lew from former Sea Cadets and colleagues from all over the world.

He said that he and his two brothers had all been Lew’s cadets at Farnham unit.



• Lt Cdr (SCC) Phil Coast RNR (left) and Lt Cdr (SCC) Peter Gooding RNR (right) receive their certificates from Captain Sea Cadets Capt Jonathan Holloway



• POC Rosie Clark

Rosie at pinnacle of Corps

A MEMBER of Barnsley unit has achieved one of the few places at the pinnacle of the Sea Cadet Corps.

POC Rosie Clark, 16, has been selected as one of six Navy Board Cadets in the country, in a role that will see her representing the whole of Eastern England.

This is a prestigious role as it provides the chosen cadets a privileged insight into higher naval policy and the work of very senior RN serving officers.

Navy Board Cadets attend ceremonies and functions alongside a Royal Navy Board member and other senior RN officers.

This includes formal parades, ship visits, royal occasions, opening ceremonies and presentations and awards.

Rosie said she was “thrilled and surprised to have been selected as Navy Board Cadet – it is an amazing opportunity to represent the Sea Cadets at highest level.”

Rosie joined Barnsley unit in 2007 at the age of ten, and progressed through the Junior Sea Cadets before joining the senior section in 2009.

During that time she has achieved success in many aspects of training including catering, first aid and engineering, as well as the more obvious boating subjects you would expect of a Sea Cadet.

She has also earned a BTEC Level 2 in Public Services, a qualification that took her just one month to complete.

During her time as a cadet she has attended many courses and competitions, and was honoured to take part in the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Pageant on board the TS Royalist in 2012.

Last summer she spent six weeks training to become a RYA Dinghy Instructor, which means she can now instruct and pass on her love of sailing to others.

Other highlights of her time in cadets include a week in Bavaria in 2012 taking part in various adventurous activities such as Via Ferrata, abseiling and climbing.



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● The Royal Navy snowboard team in Meribel

Masters sizzle in the snow

ROYAL Navy athletes have thrived in each of the eight winter sports disciplines this season, writes Rowan Taylor, Secretary of the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association.

From the snowy peaks of the French Alps to the world-class ice sliding track of Igls, Austria, over 100 RN athletes have represented their Service at the highest level in some of the most exhilarating and dangerous events that RN sport has to offer.

The RNWSA governs the eight disciplines of Alpine skiing, snowboarding, Telemark, Nordic biathlon, Cresta, bobsleigh, luge and skeleton.

Each of these has its own single and inter-Service championships, traditionally beginning with the ever-popular RN Alpine Championships held in Tignes, France, and this year more than 700 RN personnel took to the slopes in fantastic weather to hone their skills on skis or snowboard, many of whom had never set foot on-piste before.

The tantalizing mixture of expert instruction, challenging races and superb nightlife proved to be a great success with all ranks and ratings and even attracted considerable praise from the Second Sea Lord, attending his first Alpine Championships.

The eventual winners of the overall ski prizes were Lt Chris Sharrott and Lt Cdr Sam Dunbar, both of whom are stalwarts of the Navy team.

Having recently been crowned



● Sgt John Jackson

RN Young Athlete of the Year, LAET Ross Taylor took the men's snowboard title and the women's event was won by LPT Lucy McKenna.

On completion of the Alpine Championships, the ski, snowboard and Telemark athletes travelled to Meribel, France, for the inter-Services event, and although hopes were high in each discipline, none had predicted the success to follow.

After a demanding week of competition, the Royal Navy became overall individual champions in men's snowboarding (won by LAET Ross Taylor), Telemarking (won by Lt Col Huan Davies) and, for the first time in ten attempts, men's skiing (won by Lt Chris Sharrott).

The RN is the first Service in history to achieve the 'triple crown' of gold medals in each of the Alpine events and the athletes were no doubt energised on by the huge amount of chocolate given out by the RNWSA President Rear Admiral Jonathan Woodcock and his wife Joanna.

Chris has also since been selected to captain the men's team at the next Combined Services event.

Running in parallel to the Alpine Championships, the RN sent a strong team of Royal Marines to the inter-Services Nordic Championships in Rupholding, Germany.

The team was only reformed in 2012 after a ten-year gap and as ever, the bootnecks were required to punch above their weight against the full-time world-class athletes of the Army and RAF.

This gruelling sport tests the courage, grit and determination of the athletes to their full and, following the maximal exertion of the 'skating' phases, athletes must recover their composure



● LAET Ross Taylor, from Plymouth, pulls a trick from a kicker to finish third in the snowboard cross

Pictures: POA(Phot) Owen Cooban



● Left: POPT Lucy McKenna in the snowboard parallel slalom final



● Right: Std Brett Wild from Faslane on his way to victory in the Alpine slalom



● Lt Chris Sharrott won the super giant slalom



● Royal Marine Lt Col Richard Parvin in the Thales Telemark Classic

quickly to fire a .22 calibre round at a miniature target some 50 metres away.

Despite a mix-up with directions that resulted in an additional 7km of skiing, the highest-placed RN team, led by Capt Ollie Whithy RM, finished in a very respectable sixth overall – a significant improvement on last year.

If you fancy testing your aerobic fitness and rifle skills in arguably the most challenging of all winter sports, why not get in touch with the Nordic team through the RNWSA website?

The inter-Service Ice Championships marked the conclusion of the 2013/14 winter sports season and included the disciplines of skeleton, bobsleigh and luge.

Fresh from a highly-successful Olympic games in Sochi, where he achieved an astonishing overall fifth place, Sgt John Jackson was in great shape to defend his inter-Services bobsleigh crown.

However, to do so, he and former Olympian Maj Karl Johnston RM would have to overcome the world-class Army pairing of Lamin Deen and Steve Smith.

In the end, the Army pair proved marginally stronger and were crowned eventual winners by 0.88sec.

Jackson took his revenge a day later as he went on to win gold in the four-man event in the British National Championships.

Competing in the ladies' event, Lt Deni Milner and Lt Alex Kelly narrowly missed out on an overall bronze medal by only 0.34sec – a great performance by Alex in just her first season.

The inter-Service skeleton and luge events present perhaps the most dangerous challenge for Navy athletes.

Not only must they race down an ice track at speeds up to 85mph on a sled no more than a few inches off the ground, they must do so against a number

of full-time international athletes from the RAF and Army.

During his attempt to win the novice cup in the luge event, Lt John Ford crashed spectacularly, resulting in a shattered patella, broken fibula and broken ankle.

Not to be dismayed, however, the RN team performed admirably and Lt Ted Nicholls later achieved an excellent fourth place in the British National Championships.

In the skeleton event, team Captains AB(CIS) Iliana Veneti and LD Ed Maddy performed extremely well against talented RAF and Army opposition and just missed out on individual medals, finishing fifth and fourth respectively.

Despite the risks, many of the sponsors and VIPs took the opportunity to have a go at skeleton, including Navy two-star Vice President Ice, Rear Admiral Matt Parr.

The Admiral later sent his Flag Lt, Capt Joe Carvill RM, ahead

for a recce on the luge but then decided to call it a day...

A full report on the inter-Services Cresta Championships was published in last month's edition of *Navy News*, however, it is worth repeating that after a very close competition, the RN team were crowned inter-Service champions for the first time in many years – a superb achievement.

Each of the RNWSA disciplines offers an opportunity for athletes of all standards to have a go.

The association holds a number of UK and overseas training camps and selection events, and if you fancy trying something new why not get in touch through our website on the PDev Portal?

The events are subsidised by both the RN Sports Lottery and the RNWSA – it's not as expensive as you might think. Visit https://pdevportal.co.uk/sports/winter_sports



● WO2 Frankie Vaughan in the giant slalom

Learning a lot from RN

THE Senior Service rugby team posted a comfortable 64-19 victory at Cambridge University RFC.

A good number of Navy supporters travelled to Cambridge for the match, and they returned warmed by the high-tempo rugby that the Navy produced.

Dale Sleeman led the Royal Navy out and also immediately set the tone for his side.

A blistering break saw him cut through the defence to score under the posts to leave Huntley with an easy conversion and a 7-0 lead for the Navy with barely two minutes played.

It was the perfect start but, to their credit, Cambridge responded well. A penalty conceded by the otherwise very impressive Tom Cowley at lock gave them field position and from the lineout their pack drove over to score from a rolling maul.

Thomas converted to level the scores at 7-7. It was to be the last moment of cheer for the home supporters in the first half.

From the restart the Royal Navy grabbed the game by the scruff of the neck and never let go. Harry Collins was working hard in the loose and well supported by Tom Cowley, Josh Terry and Toots Vakalutukali.

Their offload game kept the university's defence on the back foot, which was fully exploited by Nathan Huntley at fly half.

His deft passing regularly brought centres Sam Davies (who had replaced Sleeman) and Tichias on to the ball and through the defence.

Tries from Kyle Woods, Mark Owen, Mat Tichias and two from Huntley were a fair reflection of the Navy's dominance. Their high-speed, enterprising rugby had entertained the crowd and at half time they had established a 40-7 lead.

So often teams struggle to regain their rhythm after the half-time break. However, at the start of the third quarter the Navy showed the same determination and work rate to keep their attacking game going.

In the same fashion as the first half the early Naval bombardment sent Woods in for his second try of the game and the Royal Navy's seventh of the match.

There was no let-up for the students when the Navy's replacement came on. Their energy was rewarded with further tries for Dom Taylor, a third for Huntley and also Eldon Myers.

It is to Cambridge University's credit that the last ten minutes belonged to them and they finished 19-64.

Double despair for Portland

HMS Portland's footballers took on matches against the Ghanaian Navy and the Senegalese Navy.

Portland were quick to settle in to the game against the Ghanaian side, using the steep hill to their advantage.

Fifteen minutes into the game Portland's ET(ME) Hills looped a long ball into the box which AB (WS) Heron managed to connect with a delicate head onto the far post and into the goal.

Into the second half Portland started strongly but around halfway through quickly conceded two goals taking the score to 2-1 to the Ghanaians – which is how the match finished.

Led by the new team manager, LET(ME) Monnington, the Senegal match was split into four quarters; despite a promising start, a lucky break from the Senegalese confused goalkeeper AB(CIS) Bee and Portland were 1-0 down.

When the match restarted a goal from LS Loughlin brought the team back into the game.

The Senegalese ended the third quarter 2-1 ahead and ended the match 3-1 winners.

Leiba of love as RN man misses medal



● CPOET(MESM) Colin Leiba, from HMS Drake, achieved his highest finish at the WIRC in Boston

THE Royal Navy team of 18 proved successful at the World Indoor Rowing Championships in Boston, USA.

No RN rower has ever won a medal at this event, in which more than 2,100 rowers took part, but CPOET(MESM) Colin Leiba (HMS Drake), achieved his highest finish with fourth place in the Men's 50+ Hwt in 6min 31.8sec.

LPT Julie Stroud (RNNS Culdrose) finished fifth in the Women's Lwt 30+ race with a personal best of 7min 47.9sec.

Team Manager Paul Winton (MCTA) cajoled a pair of worn hips to a sixth-place finish in the Men's 55+ Hwt race to match his previous best WIRC placing.

The fastest 2,000m by a Royal Navy rower was LPT Ollie Osborne (BRNC), who finished seventh in the men's 30+ Hwt race in 6min 09.1sec.

Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (HMS Lancaster) was ninth in the Men's 30+ Hwt in 6min 22.2sec.

Lt Mark 'Rio' Grandy (MCTA) was the only Men's Lwt, and was ecstatic to set a personal best of 7min 19.1sec to finish seventh in the Men's 30+ Lwt.

WO1 Andy 'Big Andy' Patience (HMS Collingwood) bided his time, rowing a sensible and committed race to finish 9th in an excellent personal best of 6min 45.5sec in the Men's 50+ Hwt.

Sgt Tim Hughes (CTCRM) and Lt Craig Guest (FOST HMS Collingwood), both relatively inexperienced, set personal bests of 6min 25.0sec (16th) and 6 mins 31.4sec (22nd) in the Men's 30+ Hwt.

Lt Cdr Foxy West (NCHQ) had battled a niggling knee injury in the months preceding the race, barely able to walk after the race, a smile emerged as he realised he'd set a personal best of 6min 35.8sec to finish 15th in the Men's 40+ Hwt.

Slightly less pleased was Lt Stu Moss (HMS Vengeance), who was 0.1 sec slower and one place behind.

Lt Cdr Chris Hutchinson (FOST HM) set a season's best of 6min 47.0sec to finish 31st in the Men's 40+Hwt.

Lt Cdr Derek Powles (NCHQ) defied a back injury to finish 63rd in the same race, although 45 secs slower than his season's best of 6min 39.8sec.

Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol) set a personal best of 6min 29.0sec to finish 19th in the Men's 30+ Hwt. PO Richie Galpin (HMS Sultan) rowed 6min 53.3sec to finish 34th in the same race.

Lt Cdr Maxine Ashby (RNNS Culdrose) was ninth in the Women's 40+ Lwt in 8min 44.5sec.

In the open category, featuring rowers aged under 30, Lt Rory McAlpine (HMS Lancaster) rowed a personal best of 6min 31.8sec. NA(SE) Chess Morton (RNNS Culdrose), who suffered a significant shoulder injury leading up to the event, was content with 44th place in 7min 25.4sec in the Women's Open Hwt race.

The Royal Navy had two teams in a 4,000m team event, where all four team members rowed simultaneously. Royal Navy 'A' rowers, Jim Thomson, Collin Leiba, Craig Guest and Rory West stepped on the podium to collect third-placed medals, but only just one second ahead of the Royal Navy 'B' team comprising Jim Hyde, Stu Moss, Tim Hughes and Paul Winton, the latter standing in for Rory McAlpine who had remained prone following his race.



● LPT Ollie Osborne in action

Mavericks put up fight



● AB(CIS) Megan Meyer leads out Mne Joshua Bowles on a running play for the Portland Mavericks

PERSONNEL from HMS Portland played a Flag American Football match against a team from the US Embassy in Freetown, Sierra Leone, as part of wider regional engagement during her APT(S) deployment.

The team, known as the Portland Mavericks, had previously played back home in Plymouth against a national league team but is now using the visits on deployment to seek out other teams against whom they can test their developing 'playbook'.

The Marine Engineer Officer and Caretaker Head Coach, Lt Cdr AJ Snell, has been promoting the sport in Portland for some time and, with grass roots funding from HMS Drake, has recruited a core of players from all departments, including the embarked Royal Marines

detachment.

"The attraction of the limited-contact flag version of American Football is that it can be played by both sexes and all abilities on just about any surface. It is a great workout and the fundamentals are quick to learn," he explained.

The match against the US Embassy was won by the hosting Americans, 35-21, but was a creditable result considering the inexperience of some of the Mavericks roster.

The team is looking for opposition at every port visit on the deployment, with a view to a rematch against the Plymouth Buccaneers when Portland returns to the UK in the summer.

For more information on American Football in the UK see www.bafa.org.uk

Victory a real booster

 **ONSIDE with Lt Mark Toogood, RNFA**

RN Seniors

The RN Seniors beat a strong Middlesex FA to give themselves a fantastic opportunity to become champions of the Southern Counties Cup and provide a real confidence boost ahead of the Inter Services.

The RN got off to a brilliant start, playing at a ferocious pace and closing the opposition down at every opportunity.

On ten minutes LPT Foxy Foxhall played a high ball over the top of the defence which bounced in the opponents' area. Man of the match Cpl Shea Saunders applied significant pressure on the keeper, allowing the RN forward to finish into an open goal.

The RN lead was doubled on 29 minutes when Mne Mike Scott turned the Middlesex left back inside out before finally delivering a pin-point cross towards Saunders, who headed beyond the keeper for 2-0.

Middlesex pulled a goal back before the break, and equalised in the second half.

But the RN set about restoring their lead, and their persistence was rewarded on 74 minutes with a goal from CPO Phil Archibald. Don't miss next month's edition for the Inter Service round-up.

RN U23s

Following a successful training camp in Plymouth, the RN U23s began their Inter Service Championship with a home match against the Army.

Head Coach WO1 Marty Wallace and Assistant C/Sgt Kev Hazeldine assembled the strongest 18-man squad available and were very positive going into the match.

The early exchanges were even until AET Danny Brookwell broke down the left-hand side, driving at the Army defence and unleashing an unstoppable shot from 22 yards that screamed past the keeper.

The Navy missed a couple of opportunities to extend their lead soon after, with good work from L/Cpl Olly Kennedy and man of the match AB Tom Shaw.

The Army grew into the game and were a constant threat from set pieces; more slack defending resulted in an Army equaliser on 37 minutes.

The opposition right winger found himself with only the keeper to beat and his shot cruelly deflected off Navy keeper, MNE Steve Cross, and into the net for 1-1.

The game looked destined for a stalemate when the Army broke down the left on 84 minutes to make it 1-2.

But deep into stoppage time debutant Mne Ryan McKechnie levelled the score.

The U23s Inter Service story will conclude in next month's edition with the match against the RAF.

Base on show

MORE than 300 people turned up for HMS Collingwood's Physical Training Department's biannual showcase.

Personnel from the base joined companies from across the south to see the leisure, sport and recreational facilities available.

WO1 Andy Patience, who manned a field gun recruitment stand, said: "We're keen to get people involved at an early stage. It's not just about strength but fitness and team building too."

No stroll in the country

MORE THAN 100 of the top endurance athletes from the Armed Forces took on a challenging cross-country course at HMS Raleigh.

The Inter Service Cross Country Championship included a junior men's and women's championships over a 5.2km course and senior men's and veterans' race over 9.2 km.

In the junior men's race, an outstanding performance from AET Elliot Wylie (Sultan) saw him finish third for a bronze medal.

Close behind in fourth came AB Daryl Pickering (Collingwood), who ran with passion and real commitment to finish just outside the podium places. Backed up by sterling performances from the rest of the junior team, the RN finished second overall behind a very strong Army team.

A similar scene unfolded in the next race, the veterans' championships.

Nationally-ranked veteran athlete Lt Cdr Tony Dunn (Drake) ran his strongest Inter Service race for years to claim third place.

An inspired run by Lt Col Simon O'Hernihy (RMR Bristol) saw him claim eighth place with the rest of the RN team packing well close behind. However, the strength in depth shown by both the Army and RAF teams saw them finish first and second respectively.

Lt Linda Lawrence (Raleigh), making a welcome return to competition this winter after the birth of her daughter, led the Navy women home with a tenth-place finish. Overall, the Army ran out comfortable winners with the RAF second.

The final race of the day was the Senior Men's Championships. In a close race RAF athlete Cpl Sam Mitchell pipped Sqn Ldr Livesey to set a new record of 31.15 mins.

Maj Charlie Pennington lead the RN athletes home to secure sixth place.

The RAF ran out narrow team winners over the Army team.

Tough test for warriors

RECOVERING Royal Marines and other troops are taking on the cream of injured US Marine Corps athletes in America.

They are undergoing selection for the famed Wounded Warrior Games later this year.

Those lucky enough to be selected stand a good chance of taking part in the first ever International Wounded Warrior Games on the London Olympics site in September.

Among those taking part are Marines Phillip Woodgate, 26, and Gus Hirst, 26, both of Plymouth-based Hasler Company.

Gus, of Cambridge, was previously in Plymouth-based 42 Commando. He has a foot injury from snowboarding for the Navy which has limited him to discus, swimming and archery as his chosen trials sports.

He said: "I've been training a lot in the gym as part of my rehab and it's been stepped up for the Wounded Warrior trials."

Phil has a knee injury. He served in Afghanistan and has been training hard for trials in archery and the 10km hand-biking (recumbent hand-driven cycles).

He said: "It's a great chance to push the limits of what I can do, to test my fitness and recovery in a new direction. It gives me fresh focus and motivation."



● LAET Rogers in action for the Gypsy Rugby Club in the USA

Rugby player lands place in USA team

A ROYAL Navy engineering technician has been poached by the USA – to play rugby.

LAET James 'Cardiff' Rogers, currently undergoing Lightning II engineering training at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, was asked to play for the Gypsy Rugby Club – an exclusive touring team.

Before he was deployed to the USA in November last year, LAET Rogers, 24, contacted the Okaloosa Islanders, the nearest rugby team to Eglin, and was invited to join their twice-weekly practice sessions.

"I participated in training as well as coaching the backs a little, modernising their approach to the beautiful game," he said.

He then went on to represent the Islanders against teams such as Biloxi, Tallahassee, Fort Lauderdale and Mobile.

After a few matches for the Islanders, LAET Rogers, who hails from Blackwood in South Wales, was invited to tour with the Gypsy Rugby Club.

The team is made up of



● LAET Rogers in New Orleans during Mardi Gras weekend

players from many countries and the only way to get in is to be invited by a Founding Father.

LAET Rogers said: "I was thrilled at the opportunity and as a bonus, it was also the team's tenth anniversary.

The tour took place in New Orleans on Mardi Gras weekend and it was fantastic. Everyone

was extremely welcoming and the camaraderie was something I was yet to see in America. It was like a huge family.

"The following day I received another invite from Capt Mike Kerr, a US Army pilot and fellow Gypsy, who asked me to tour with a US military representative side.

"I just had to do it – the St Patrick's Day tournament in Savannah is one of the biggest rugby tournaments in America."

The military representatives finished third in a tournament of around 60 teams.

LAET Rogers said: "The matches were a mixture of abilities but my fellow classmates were all invited and encouraged to attend the socials that followed, allowing us to socialise with different communities and represent the British Armed Forces in a good light as well as seeing parts of the south we may not have otherwise."

During the tour LAET Rogers met some Servicemen from United States Marine Corps Air

Station Beaufort, where he will be based in 2016, and was asked to help set up a rugby team when he arrives.

On completion of his engineering training, LAET Rogers will be one of six Royal Navy Air Engineering Technicians – along with one Royal Navy Air Engineering Officer, an RAF pilot and six RAF technicians – to work at USMC Beaufort in South Carolina.

They will be supporting the single-pooled UK Lightning aircraft – the Royal Navy's next generation jump jet.

The UK Lightning Force, comprising personnel and aircraft, will start to build up at Beaufort in early 2016.

LAET Rogers, who was based with 771 NAS at RNAS Culdrose before joining the Lightning II programme, added: "Between now and leaving Eglin I have a few more games left for Okaloosa to look forward to, but my eye is already on the next Gypsy tour in New York City later this year."

Side ride to first top contest

A ROYAL Navy riding team has qualified for its first championship final.

Five members of the Royal Navy Riding Club took part in the Festival of the Horse Eventers' Challenge Qualifier at Pontispool.

The challenge comprises seven show jumps followed by a testing course of 17 fences to be jumped at the optimum speed of 325 metres per minute and 400mpm respectively.

A total of 14 teams competed in the Challenge 90cm; the teams comprising four horse and rider combinations, with the best three scores counting.

Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark with Rabbit and Lt Becca Talbot on



Tara both jumped clear and close to the optimum time. Marianne Morffew on J also jumped clear but was awarded penalties after turning a circle in response to a spurious buzzer – after launching

Finally Lt Cdr Vic Sollitt on Prim and Proper jumped clear but was awarded penalties after turning a circle in response to a spurious buzzer – after launching

Medal haul for boxers

ROYAL Navy boxers returned from a European championship with a haul of nine medals, including five golds.

Day one of the Swedish Malmo Boxing Cup finished with nine Senior Service fighters through to the finals.

The second day of competition saw all the Navy boxers come away with either gold or silver medals.

First up was LPT Andy O'Donnell, who got a bye to the final as there were not enough boxers in his category. A brilliant performance gave the Royal Navy its first gold medal of competition.

Next was Mne Adodom Marley (Cdo Logs) in the 75kg category. Boxing for his second time in competition against a Swedish lad, he started fast but soon the Swede put Mne Marley on his back foot, causing the corner to retire Mne Marley. This gave the Navy its first silver.

The third bout saw AB Liam Sheils (Collingwood) take on Swedish international Atanas Mugerwa Hisingens in the 60kg category.

Sheils started well but the timing and accuracy from the Swede was too much. Going into the third round the Navy corner retired Sheils – another silver for the Navy team.

Fourth up was LPT Liam Short (Faslane) in the 69kg category.

LPT Short used his range to keep the shorter opponent away but soon his opponent found his range and let his hands go, putting LPT Short in trouble, causing the referee to award a standing count to the Navy man. It happened again shortly after and the referee stopped the contest to give the Navy silver.

Next was Cpl Marc Bird (CTCRM), who finished with silver against Clarence Goyeram, a Swedish international.

He was followed by Mne Aaren Meader (45Cdo), who this time secured gold against Swede Robin Korhonen Hisingens.

The next bout saw Mne Ben Jones (42Cdo) boxing a very technical southpaw fighter from Sweden.

Jones knew what to do from the start, using his fast, powerful backhand to score with good accuracy, causing the Swede to hold every time he got caught. From the start everyone knew that the Navy had its third gold of the competition.

The fourth gold came from Mne Elliot Larson, who overcame Johen Sjovall Hollyvikens.

The final bout saw Cpl James Carter beat Karl Nordström Lunds. Cpl Carter kept the pressure and aggression on and the decision went towards the Navy's man.

Temeraire all lit up

BAE Systems has installed a series of energy-saving floodlights to the Royal Navy rugby, hockey and football pitches at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth.

Temeraire provides modern sports facilities for all Forces personnel and their dependants, ex-Forces and local schools.

Light to the hockey pitch has been increased by 100 per cent while the rugby and football pitch has increased by over 75 per cent, meaning sports activities can happen 24/7 as well as seeing extensive reductions in running costs.

The floodlighting forms part of an extensive renovation project, including a full overhaul of the main building and the installation of a mezzanine floor.

UNCOMMON VALOUR

ROYAL Naval Air Station Portland, Monday, April 1, 1974.

The flying programme at HMS Osprey had been cleared for the day – save for the VIP flights coming in from London, Yeovilton, Culdrose and Lee-on-the-Solent.

After an early turn-to, the air station's personnel were dressed in their finest, ready for Ceremonial Divisions – Osprey's senior met officer and his team had pored over the charts and available readings and confidently predicted the day would be fine.

Osprey's numbers this Monday were bolstered by airmen "specially imported from other air stations for the occasion".

The occasion? The inauguration of a new branch in the Fleet Air Arm: the aircrewman.

Since the disbandment of the fabled Telegraphist/Air Gunner branch after nearly 30 years' proud service, crewing the 'back end' of helicopters had all been a bit random.

In an increasingly hi-tech, highly-specialised, professional world of the Royal Navy in the second half of the 20th Century, rating aircrew had rather been left behind – they were, as the Fleet Air Arm's in-house magazine *Flight Deck* lamented, "a hotch potch group of volunteers" taken from the rest of the Service.

More than two decades of experience had increasingly demonstrated the need for trained aircrewmen in a variety of roles.

At first they had been required to 'simply' operate the winch or act as Search and Rescue divers.

The advent of Type 194 Sonar as submarine hunting switched to skies meant previously-shipborne underwater controllers became airborne.

The Commando Helicopter Force's operations in Borneo in the 1960s gave birth to its squadrons' now-immortal 'Junglie' tag.

But the missions over the tropical wilderness also demonstrated the need for gunners and dispatchers. Maintainers volunteered to plug the gap "with no aviation training, except that gained on operations".

The conflict in the Middle East in 1967 – when the Israeli destroyer Eilat was sunk by anti-ship missiles from Egyptian fast patrol boats – demonstrated the need for a weapon to take out such threats and, in turn, the need for a missile aimer in the Fleet Air Arm's Wasp helicopters.

'Borrowing' aircrew from other branches simply couldn't continue. It wasn't popular with those who volunteered for the air world – or those they left behind in their old trades. It wasn't particularly effective, and certainly not efficient. There was little continuity or co-ordination.

"These men, although they became professional aviators with a thorough training behind them, did not belong to a professional branch," *Flight Deck* lamented.

The Fleet Air Arm had to act. And it did. In July 1973 it announced the formation of the aircrewmen's branch, open to all ratings – except artificers, mechanicians and medics – aged 19-26 (and up to 31 in special cases) interested in becoming a SAR winchman, sonar operator, commando aircrewman, SAR diver, AS12 missile aimer or communication aircraft aircrewman.

After six weeks of initial pre-flying training at HMS Daedalus in Lee-on-the-Solent, successful candidates moved on to 771 NAS at Portland or to the diving school at Portland for basic flying and diver training.

Once they'd completed these seven or five-week courses, the would-be aircrewmen went through various operational flying training courses – and for sonar operator an advanced flying training course, anything from four to 11 weeks, before wings were awarded.

In due course, the Fleet Air Arm intended to forge a branch of more than 260 senior and junior ratings.

At the time of the branch's inauguration it was a good way short of that figure – and rather top heavy with senior rates – "too many chiefs and not enough Indians" as some aircrewmen wistfully observed.

But the VIP who took the salute that April morning, Second Sea Lord Admiral Sir Derek Empson, also met a good smattering of leading hands – from Heron, Seahawk, HMS Bulwark as well as Osprey – eager to make their mark as aircrewmen.

The aircrewman of 1974 invariably had an impressive set of sideburns. All were men – this was two decades before women went to sea. And all had joined the Senior Service to learn some other trade, but had been tempted by a life in the skies.

And so it has remained – until this 40th anniversary year.

For now, the public can now join the Fleet Air Arm as aircrewmen straight from civvy street for the first time since World War 2.

The first three would-be aircrewmen began their conversion from civilians to sailors at HMS Raleigh last month, before moving on to leadership training and ground school training at RAF Shawbury near Shrewsbury, where there are courses in Search and Rescue techniques, survival and providing medical care in the air.

After that there's specialist training at RNAS Culdrose (for Merlins) and Yeovilton (commando Sea Kings) which, if passed, earns aircrewmen their wings and permits them to join front-line Fleet Air Arm squadrons.

"It would be hard to find a more rewarding and satisfying career in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines," says experienced Merlin aircrewman WO1 Steve Clay (more from him overleaf...).

"Becoming an aircrewman is a challenge which brings with it accelerated promotion and an opportunity to become a valuable member of the Royal Navy's aviation community."

Valuable. And highly valued. Don't take our word for it. Take it from the man at the top, who flew three types of Fleet Air Arm helicopters in the 1980s, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas.

"Since the formation of the branch on April 1 1974, aircrewmen have served all over the world in different aircraft types, on land and at sea, and in numerous theatres of conflict.

"They help those in distress in Search and Rescue squadrons, conduct anti-submarine warfare in Merlins, and provide invaluable assistance in navigation and airmanship in the Junglies.

"I have had the great privilege and pleasure to have served with many aircrewmen and can say from experience that their judgement is as important to the safety of the aircraft and those on board as that of any other member of aircrew.

"The professionalism and skill of this select band of aviators is often overlooked but I am delighted that they are recognised here and it is my great pleasure to wish the aircrewman's branch a very happy 40th birthday – and many more to come."

Now turn the page for first-hand accounts of aircrewmen's deeds sung and unsung over the past four decades.



The first British action of the Falklands War was the attempt to recover South Georgia by the SAS.

The team planned an attack by the most unlikely and unexpected route – an insertion by two Jungles Wessex 5 helicopters of C Flight 845 NAS on to the Fortuna Glacier, off RFA Tidespring sailing from Ascension Island. Their plan was to march across the mountains, rappel down the far side and take the Argentinian force at the whaling station at Leith by surprise.

After several aborted attempts and refuels and despite treacherous and unpredictable sub-Antarctic weather conditions up on the glacier, the SAS were inserted.

However after a few hours the weather deteriorated, winds in excess of 100 knots and swirling driving ice and snow stopped the Special Forces in their tracks.

They had made only a few hundred yards, frostbite and exposure became a growing concern. Finally they radioed for help and the two ageing Wessex returned to the glacier.

LACMN Roy 'Tug' Wilson was one of two aircrewmen in the rescue aircraft.

“We had been on standby all night taking turns to kip and got the call ‘early doors’ to recover the troopers. To be honest it wasn’t a surprise to me or Jan (Lomas): what had started as a tactical assault, insert and support task had rapidly turned into a search and rescue mission – boy if only we knew!

Once again it was no easy task to get back up to the glacier – conditions were marginal to say the least. Icing was also a threat. When we got up to the glacial plateau, it looked like an alpine postcard, clear blue sky and a wide expanse of pristine white. I remember remarking to Mike (Tidd) that the poor buggers had only managed to make about half a click from where we dropped them.

As we turned into wind to land and I opened the back door fully, one of the reasons became apparent: clearly visible beneath the white crystal surface were the darker shadows of crevasses, criss-crossing the glacier.

It later transpired that the troopers had fastened themselves to the wall inside one of these to get some much needed shelter from the raging wind.

There are a couple of things that people don’t appreciate about the conditions. Firstly, the wind was unpredictable and could go from a benign steady 20 to 30kts to a swirling, howling gale with gusts of over a 100kts in the space of a few seconds. Secondly, the white stuff is not snow as you expect in ski resorts but mainly ice crystals which are loose and cover the surface. Once the wind picks up these ice particles are blown up and visibility drops to almost zero.

Conditions up there on Fortuna Glacier were fearsome. As we landed the winds started to pick up and shake the aircraft and Lt Mike Tidd called out that the air speed indicator was flickering between 30 and 60kts. We shook from side to side and even in far northern Norway where we did our Arctic flying and survival training, we hadn’t seen it like this.

We landed first, close to the smoke grenade our stick had deployed and the troopers staggered towards us from where they had been sheltering overnight. Even dressed in Arctic clothing some of them were showing early signs of hypothermia, the sooner we got out of here and back to the ship the better. Each stick had a ‘pulk’ sled on which they carried heavier gear.

Nearby the other helicopters had landed and were loading troops: our other C flight Wessex 5 ‘Yankee Alpha’ with LACMN Jan Lomas and piloted by Lt Ian Georgeson, the other the Wessex 3 from HMS Antrim, an anti-submarine cab, not a trooping aircraft.

I got our stick and their kit onboard in pretty quick time and offered them hot soup from my flask. “I’d like to get out of here”, Mike Tidd called over the intercom. I told him I needed another 30 seconds, during which time he called Lt Cdr Ian Stanley in the Wessex 3 – as senior officer, he was leading the op.

Mike asked for permission to scoot as the conditions were good: we could

RETIRED UNDER SECTION 36(4)



The wreckage of Wessex HU.5 XT464 of 845 Naval Air Squadron, lost in terrible conditions in South Georgia on April 22 1982.

Picture: Imperial War Museum

clearly see the edge of the glacier and our route to point of descent. We got the go ahead and I leaned out of the cab on my harness and checked behind that everything was clear. “Ok Boss let’s go.” We lifted off.

Our aircraft, ‘Yankee Foxtrot’, launched and we followed the escape route down from the Glacier. We had climbed to about 200ft tops and got up to about 60 to 80kts and hadn’t gone far when Mike calmly called down for me to check outside as the visibility was declining. I cracked the door to half-way and got on the step trying to get a reference point. Well, I kid you not, it was like looking into a snow globe!

Mike was slowing and using his considerable piloting skills to try to keep stable, but with no visual reference he was trying to produce a miracle instrument hover, what we didn’t know was that the ground to our left was sloping up.

I was lucky. I had just turned inside to cop a smoke grenade from the nearest trooper (I thought if I popped one out the door we might get some reference) when the tail and left wheel contacted the incline. We had slowed to about 30 knots at that point but the left undercarriage (oleo strut) sheared off, then the blades hit next and we slammed into the ground on the port side and skidded for about 50 yards before coming to a stop.

I said I was lucky – if I hadn’t turned into the cabin I would likely have been thrown forward outside the cab and dragged along underneath. As it was I remember I was facing the trooper opposite the door and was flung backwards into the forward bulkhead.

It’s strange the thoughts that go through your head. My sense of humour made me smirk thinking about how naked the safety equipment guy would – and excuse the pun – was that the barrel of the door mounted GPMG was now wedged up the side of my helmet between the padding and my cheek. The weird thing! It never left a mark!

My next thought was safety – mine and the others. I was a stickler for making the troops belt up and they were basically still in their seats although now lying on their backs. I also gave thanks I had lashed the puk to the deck ringbolts. Mike had shut off the engines and apart from the howling wind there was silence.

I shouted up to the boss: “Everyone seems to be in one piece,” and thankfully heard him say he was too.

We clambered out of the rear door, and I shouted for the troopers to clear away as we had hot engines and fuel pouring out of the bottom of the aircraft. At that point I noticed the tail of the aircraft about 30 yards behind us. Mike had got a bit stuck in the cockpit – all his weight was hanging to the left against his harness and he was having

1/4. Mike cont.

2/4. could cont.

ROLL OF HONOUR: LACMN Lyall Bradbury, 846 NAS, killed when Wessex 5 struck a wire in Norway, March 6 1979 ♦ LACMN Ian Marchment, 820 NAS, killed in a mid-air collision off the Isle of Wight while

After months of tension and weeks of military build-up in the northern Gulf, on the night of March 20-21 2003, Coalition forces were poised to strike against the forces of Saddam Hussein – Op Telic to the British, Op Catalyst to the Australians, Iraqi Freedom to the Americans.

C/Sgt Pete ‘Wombat’ Wooldridge was serving with the Jungles of 845 Naval Air Squadron, ready to ferry the green berets

of 40 Commando into battle to seize the Al Faw peninsula.

“We’d been sitting on the ground for several hours as the weather closed in around us. A fierce sandstorm had put the assault behind by at least three hours. We knew the plan – after all, we’d rehearsed it enough times over the previous three weeks as we sailed towards the upper reaches of the Gulf.

Our nine Sea King MK4s from 845 squadron had sailed on HMS Ocean from the UK as part of a combined US/UK/AUS force assembled to invade Iraq.

Our mission was to land 40 Cdo into the oil production facility on the Al Faw peninsula by night at the same time as 42 Cdo were landing on the beaches by landing craft and American hovercraft.

Following days of bad weather, our H hour was set for 2200, when we would deliver the command group of 40 Cdo. American gunships and fighter-bombers attacked known enemy positions on the peninsula in a short bombardment prior to the operation.

On the night of March 20, Lt Cdr Finn, a senior pilot of 845 Squadron, was leading the Mk4s in an opposed assault on Al Faw.

It was a tough proposition: ambient light conditions and the general mayhem reduced the effectiveness of crews’ night vision goggles. Pilots referred to the disorientation as ‘the green.

Finn and his crew had trained extensively in demanding conditions. The connection between Arctic and desert may not be obvious, but it was the acquired in the most environments that saw through that night – those innovative use of the techniques in the Sea King Mk7.

Designed for



ROLL OF HONOUR: Cpl Michael ‘Doc’ Love DSM, 846 NAS, killed when his Sea King Mk4 suffered a bird strike, May 19 1982 ♦ PO(ACMN) Colin Vickers, 737 NAS, killed by Exocet hitting HMS Glamorgan, June 1982

After a decade as aircrew, by 1982 John Sheldon was a PO(ACMN) on 846 NAS, recently returned from three months’ winter training in Norway with the squadron’s Sea King Mk4s. When the Falklands were invaded, 846 was spread around HMS Fearless, Intrepid and especially HMS Hermes.

“On D-Day we took off at about 0400 and after the initial landing waves of troops and equipment into San Carlos we were flying all day long. At first we flew from a long way out, then as the ships got closer, the distance from ship to shore reduced. Hermes then sailed away from the islands and 846 was split between Fearless, Intrepid and ashore at Forward Operating Bases – an aircraft and its aircrew supported by a team of engineers and a tent with all the cooking and engineering facilities ashore – all the way down San Carlos Water.

The aircraft could then go off tasking

throughout the day, flying for 10 or 12 hours, probably take off in the dark and landing back on in the dark. The engineers would then look after the aircraft, we’d eat and sleep then start again on the next day’s tasking.

If we needed fuel or any major support we’d go back to the ships. There was some fuel ashore after a while but mainly we found a ship for a refill. We had to take our aircraft at one time to RFA Fort Austin for an engine change. We dropped it off, left the engineers with it disappeared then went back to it in the morning. It was like putting a car in for an MOT.

Because of the terrain around San Carlos Water, the air strikes came from two directions: south to north or north to south. The best thing to do when an air strike was on would be to land in the valleys and gullies on the side of water – but because all the ships fired their guns and missiles outwards we were in the firing line.

There was one occasion when we were on the ground, firing at an incoming aircraft,

and a ship fired a Seacat missile. It missed the Argentinean Skyhawk and exploded in mid-air, the engine from it landed about five feet from our Sea King – you could get killed in the cross fire if you weren’t careful!

Another time we were flying near Mount Kent, dropping off some artillery ammunition for the guns. We had to make our way back to Teal Inlet on the coast, when I heard over the radio that four Skyhawks were in the same area. I looked back through the side window and saw them coming down in pairs. They passed over us but we’d started our evasion procedure – so we provided a moving target for them. As we broke they fired on us, by this stage we’d got to FOB Teal and landed and shut down. Alf Tupper and I got out of the aircraft with the GPMG and started to make a brew, as you do!

Then Simon Thornewill, the pilot, noticed a 30mm cannon had knocked a hole through the main spar of a blade, so we couldn’t fly with that – we were lucky they didn’t break anyway. We called up the engineers who brought out a new blade to us and changed it so we could fly



... to the ground and looked around and, as if by magic, the swirling ice and snow had settled and we two cabs making their way towards us. Two cabs landed either side of us; Jan Lomas ran over to see if we were OK. There was no time to chat; safety was a priority.

ops up between the helicopters and I remember Jan of a job convincing the troopers to leave their we had to save weight. That's when my luck turned: into the Wessex 3 and I, being a Jungie to the core, old Yankee Alpha with Jan. We had 14 aboard – it was aed, we lifted, following the boss in the Wessex 3. still reasonably good, alternating between moderate to Ian Georgeson, our Jungie pilot stayed a few rotor flying following Antrim's Wessex leading us back down safety.

only low and reasonably slow. The Wessex 3 had something which allowed him to hover with minimum references. So the progress to the safety of the glacier edge if the he would hover and Ian would hover using him as a !

another ferocious snowstorm hit us – that's when the as continuing forward using his doppler, descending contour but Ian had lost sight of the leader. try to have another cracking pilot. Ian Georgeson drew skill and had managed to reduce speed. Jan was just try a 'conn'. Luckily, he didn't have time to open the crack – there was a roar as Ian pulled in power but we were blown sideways by the strong winds. Inevitably I caught a crevasse and once again I saw the side of a nose quarters!

reloading we were in a right old mess, not enough seat and bodies everywhere, but by a miracle, no major we'd slewed over on to our right side and I was again forward bulkhead, but this time had twelve stone of Jan me, plus some other bodies.

were running down but I remember Jan very coolly reaching to the battery master switch and turning it off. This y out was through the bubble window escape hatch. Once made sure the troops were also following, Jan and I or Ian who was stuck in his seat still in the aircraft. up on to the wreckage, which was seriously close to the killed him free.

one together, we assessed injuries and I could not were only minor cuts and abrasions. The worst of the ed to the SAS sergeant who copped it in both aircraft say it? It sure wasn't his lucky day!

up our options. Walking off the glacier was a non-starter so pivouac, knowing the guys would move heaven and earth so but also knowing realistically it would not be too soon. moment we climbed out of the wreckage the wind dropped ice settled. We could see Yankee Foxtrot about a half an and I and some troopers decided to get the pulk and from inside it and gather as much kit as possible which between the two crashes.

re wearing our immersion (goon) suits – walking any em is a trial on a level surface. By the time we got there inside with perspiration, fortunately we had plenty of this point easily see that Ian and the other troopers had

RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)

already inflated the other liferaft for shelter and got the SARBE (Search and Rescue Beacon Equipment) going as well as running out the HF radio later than Ian had also got a brew going. Good lad!

I will never forget the trip back to the camp site. We set off, the troopers pulling the pulk and Jan and I waddling on behind with a couple of bergens. Trailing from the back of the pulk was a length of string about 6ft long. The wind hit and the vis dropped in an instant, but the troopers pushing on and all I had between me and stumbling around blind was that slithering piece of cord. I can tell you now I broke a personal best keeping up with that sled – up to that point I think that was the most panicked I

We settled in for a long haul, thanking all the gods for our recently-refreshed Arctic training in Bardufoss in Norway.

The weight of us in the dinghies kept them reasonably stable and the sides kept the freezing wind out. We also had the short range radios from our lifejackets which enabled us to talk with any rescue aircraft, if it

We waited listening for a rescuer, and after a couple of hours we heard the familiar sound of a Wessex, but we also had low cloud and worsening weather. Ian managed to speak with them but they were unable to land and returned to Antrim. It looked like we'd be spending a night on the glacier – something the SAS were definitely not looking forward to again.

Then after a while we once again heard the Wessex searching for a gap in the cloud, and then the sound got closer and the flaps on the liferaft shook as it landed near our bright orange shelter.

Squeezing into the Wessex I hoped this would be a more successfully flight. Lifting for a third time we slid off the glacier and a short time later spotted the sea and HMS Antrim below us.

There were 16 of us in the aircraft – even stripped out, it was seriously heavy. There were no seats in the back except the observer's by the radar, occupied by Chris Parry. Jan and I were sat on the floor next to each other and we were all in rows, crammed in to the small rear cabin area. I think due to the high wind speed on the glacier, the Wessex 3 managed a reasonably good take-off, but Jan and I both knew that down at sea level this seriously-overloaded bird was going to get one chance – and one chance only – to make it back on to the Antrim's deck; there would be no 'go around'.

Looking back on the whole experience, if I was ever frightened, it was during that trip back down the mountain and anticipating the deck landing.

Jan and I could clearly see the altimeter and air speed indicator repeaters in the observer's panel so we knew the score.

Jan and I were holding and squeezing each other's hands like a couple of exited teenagers on their first ever rollercoaster ride.

We also knew that life expectancy in the South Atlantic at that time of year was probably around ten minutes – maybe more in the goon suits, but not a lot. We also knew where the exits were if we ditched, but knew the troopers probably did not. Having carried out annual dunker escapes several times with non-aircrew, we knew that panic would set in the minute the aircraft hit the water.

We probably had our escape chances around ten per cent should the manure hit the air re-circulating device.

I would like to state here and now that Lt Cdr Ian Stanley, the pilot of the overloaded aircraft, is a true hero and a pilot of the highest degree.

How he managed that controlled crash on the pitching flight deck and the end of our ordeal I will never know. I swear the aircraft oleo struts collapsed under the force.

I am not embarrassed to say that when the lashings went on to secure the aircraft to the deck and the engines and rotors were winding down, silent tears of gratitude were rolling down my cheek (I told Mike Tidd who was on the deck to meet us that the wind had got in my eyes).

I owe a debt of gratitude to Mike and Ian for their superb skill and ability in extreme conditions and for the courage and comradeship shown by my friend Adrian (Jan) Lomas.

We owe our lives to the skill and courage of the Wessex 3 crew.



... flying in a Sea King Mk2, March 6 1982 ♦ **PO(ACMN) Ben Casey**, 846 NAS, killed when Sea King Mk4 from HMS Hermes crashed in bad weather, April 23 1982 (first British fatality in Falklands war)

surveillance and control, it played a key role in bringing coherence to the confused land picture – a wholly unforeseen, but invaluable, use of the system.

In a classic airborne night assault, 40 Commando Royal Marines and US Marines landed by helicopter, capturing over 200 prisoners for no loss at their three strategic objectives.

At the same time, air and sea landings captured the gas and oil platforms out at sea. One of the first objectives of the Coalition campaign in Iraq was to capture the oil industry in the Al Faw peninsula intact before it could be sabotaged or destroyed by the

Iraqi military – thus preventing an ecological disaster similar to the 1991 Gulf War and allowing a quicker resumption of oil exports, vital to the rebuilding of Iraq after the war.

The cloud base dropped even further and the insertion was aborted. A new insertion was planned using RAF Chinook and Puma helicopters for dawn. The landings finally took place – six hours late and on to insecure landing zones. All the objectives were taken and secured.

A second assault by 42 Cdo followed within an hour. The marines were preceded by USMC Cobra gunships and

flew in by USMC helicopters to land just north of the town of Al Faw, destroying enemy artillery which could threaten the oil infrastructure and 40 Cdo's flank.

The second assault was preceded by artillery and naval bombardment, the artillery fire came from three British and one US artillery batteries positioned on Bubiyan Island, the naval component from HM Ships Richmond, Marlborough and Chatham and HMAS Anzac.

The insertion began badly with appalling visibility, worsened by fires and sand. The headquarters of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force crashed in a US CH-46 Sea

Knight as the assault formation turned over the brigade assembly area, killing everyone aboard.

3 Commando Brigade would also seize Umm Qasr at the same time so that its only deep water port in Iraq could be used to bring in humanitarian supplies once the Khawr Abd Allah waterway was cleared by a mine counter-measures task group a week later.

The United States Marine Corps placed 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit under the command of 3 Commando Brigade so that the Brigade had the necessary force to capture both targets. ■■



... e 12 1982 ♦ **Cpl G P Lelittka**, 846 NAS, killed in abseiling accident at Stonehouse, July 13 1984 ♦ **LACMN Paul Summers**, 826 NAS, killed when Sea King Mk5 collided with a Hercules, June 27 1985

aircraft back to our base. We only stayed for another week that incident. By then the under had been signed and we were things up. We did get to ferry General Menendez, the Argentinean commander, and some of his senior to Fearless for negotiations. We sailed back on Fearless via Ascension Island and arrived back in UK two weeks ahead of the main force. After dropping off the ones in Plymouth, we flew back to Devonport and home. It was great back – the euphoria and feeling the country was tremendous. The operation was fantastic – everyone wanted to congratulate us and talk what we'd done.

Unusually though, we weren't go to leave straight away because the following week was busy at Yeovilton and we had to up and prepare for that! ■■



PO(ACMN) Kieran 'Cheesy' Cheeseman joined the Royal Navy in February 1990 as an 18-year-old air engineering mechanic on the Jungie circuit with Commando Helicopter Force.

'Seeing the light' Cheesy transferred to the Aircrewman branch in 1997 and received his wings, becoming a 'pinger' leading aircrewman in 1999. His first draft as an Aircrewman was on 819 NAS in Prestwick, Scotland before moving to Culdrose to become a Search and Rescue aircrewman in 2001.

After a tour with 771 NAS, Cheesy transferred to Merlin MK1 to return to the pinging world and spent much of his time with 814 NAS – the Flying Tigers, including time aboard all three Invincible-class carriers.

Qualifying as a Aircrewman Instructor in 2006, 824 NAS as an Instructor before joining 829 NAS and embarked in HMS Richmond with the frigate's Merlin flight in 2008.

It was late 2008, when as part of Richmond's Flight; I was the first Merlin aircrewman to track an Akula-class submarine.

I was on the bridge, waiting to be 'actioned', watching the ship pitch and roll almost uncontrollably in the typical North Atlantic winter sea. The underwater warfare operators were calling out the range and bearing, when the shout came; 'Action Merlin, Action Merlin'. Getting airborne and receiving a handover from the ship we laid a passive barrier and got the closest contact I've ever seen. ■■

After another spell with the Flying Tigers, Cheesy was back with 829 NAS in 2013 aboard HMS

Illustrous when the carrier found herself needed in the Philippines.

We were working alongside other Navy and Army aircraft, our Merlin flew every day either taking specialist teams ashore, offering medical assistance, conducting damage repair or flying under-slung loads to the typhoon-affected areas. The ship embarked around 500 tonnes of food, shelter and damage repair kits in Singapore, whilst en route to the Philippines, and it is this aid and help our Merlin was delivering.

Although it was hard missing Christmas at home with the family, knowing we were doing a worthwhile task made all the difference!

Seeing the initial devastation was heartbreaking but the difference we made in such a short time, really was outstanding. I reckon as a single Flight, I flew a staggering 75 hours during the two-week operation and the aircraft carried over 100 tonnes of aid and supplies ashore. ■■

Sgt Tony Russell (pictured inset) was winchman of Rescue 193, scrambled in July 2011 when the Swedish yacht Andriette flashed a mayday as she foundered at night in heavy seas, 110 nautical miles south of RNAS Culdrose. The Royal Marine takes up the dramatic story of the rescue:

“The yacht had lost steerage, the engine unserviceable, sails damaged and its plight desperate. Conditions were extreme – heavy rain squalls, high winds, mountainous seas and a running swell. The Andriette was side on to the waves and moving violently in a Sea State 7, pitching and rolling all over the place.

Beyond the range of other rescue assets, time was of the essence. As we approached the yacht and switched from Night Vision Goggles to white light, Capt ‘Rosko’ RM brought us into the hover alongside the yacht. Lt Cdr ‘Lusky’ Luscombe carried out his checks, read out our power figures and cleared us to open the cargo door.

Normally at this stage, the observer/winch operator – Lt ‘Tom’ Sawyer – and I would run through a recce, conduct and emergencies brief.

Tonight, however, there was only silence as we looked at the scene below us. Normally we would attempt a hi-line transfer – a weighted bag linked to 200 feet of rope that is connected to the winch hook is passed down to the yacht and allows the winch/winchman to be hauled closer to the stricken vessel.

However, as we watched the tip of the mast crash toward the aircraft and the guy-wires scythe through the air, Lusky summed it up nicely: “Bloody Hell!”

The hi-line had to be discounted because of the violence of the yacht’s movements and the waves, so we opted to place the two crew into their inflatable liferaft, stream this aft of the yacht, clear of the whipping mast and guy-wires and conduct a hi-line transfer of the survivors from there.

ROLL OF HONOUR: LACMN Guy Edwards, 826 NAS, killed when Sea King Mk5 crashed into the sea, Oct 13 1988 ♦ **LACMN Robert Scott**, 819 NAS, killed when Sea King Mk6 crashed off Islay, Nov 6 1993

Now a veteran Merlin aircrewman, WO1 Steve Clay began his life in pinging hunting the Soviet bear in Sea King Mk5s with the Cold War at its height.

“Whilst listening to the last few words of the brief, I look at my watch. It’s now 0430.

“...And finally just to reiterate, the weather is not looking brilliant with a high risk of sea fog during most of the forenoon. Gents, that’s the brief complete. We launch in 45 minutes...”

The crew of the ASW Sea King in RFA Tidespring go their separate ways to complete final preparations.

As leading aircrewman, I go to the embarked portable helicopter acoustic analysis unit to collect the aircraft’s recording device and various publications that I’ll need in-flight. All checked, I head to the flight deck.

The aircraft is prepared, fuelled and nearly ready to go. The engineers are removing the final few blanks from the engines. We are a fair way north and it’s already light – in fact it doesn’t stay dark very long in this part of

the world. The air is still, apart from the shouts and calls of the ground crew as they go about their business.

I approach the aircraft and commence my walk around looking for any abnormalities. I reach the cabin door and throw my gear, then climb onboard. Moving to the front of the aircraft in order to attach the aircraft’s recording device I look around continuing my pre-flight inspections as I go.

Tic, tic, tic go the engine igniters and No.1 engine springs to life, filling the rear cabin with the familiar smell of jet efflux. On connecting myself to the intercom system I hear the pilots call: “Generator checks are good. You have power in the back.”

This is our cue to commence powering up the various aircraft systems: sonar, radar, navigation systems and radios.

All the crew are quite busy now. Access code in and the passive sonics system starts to boot up. The active sonar is ready and I start moving switches to check it out. That done, I attend to the passive system and begin inputting the search parameters for the submarine that we are

going to look for. The intercom system comes alive with all of the challenge and response checks which are being led by the pilots. The aircraft is now vibrating as the blades are turning and we are now five minutes to launch.

The helicopter controller updates us on the ship’s position, flying course and where we should expect Tidespring to be in about four hours’ time – our expected sortie duration. We then receive the tactical update on the warship that we will be working with. HMS Cleopatra, and the contact that she is holding on her towed array sonar. Our transit will be 70 miles to the north.

We plan to head for the ship and establish communications en route. Once we arrive, I will winch down the observer who will head for the ops room for a face-to-face tactical update; while he is doing that, I will winch up a fuel hose and refuel the aircraft in flight so that our tanks are full. Fuelling done and observer back onboard we head off climbing to 3,000ft to start dropping our search pattern of sonobuoys.

Search pattern in the water and all buoys are serviceable.

If we have got it right, we

should start to see contact on the charts in about five minutes.

CONTACT IN and analysing.

Now I am busy. Several lines start to appear on the paper charts – it is the frequency of the lines and relationship to each other that will allow me to classify the contact type. Classification achieved, my fingers dance over the keyboard so that I can get the system into a tracking mode. More sonobuoys are prepared and launched and the Cold War game of cat and mouse plays itself out one more time – but this time it will be slightly different.

Studying the charts, I become aware that we have two different contacts within our sonobuoy field. We relay this to the Cleopatra. We persist with our analysis and start tracking both contacts.

Time starts to fly – literally. Cleopatra asks for our endurance and we have another 45 minutes on task before we need to head home to Tidespring.

Cleopatra asks us to stay on task and come back to her for in-flight refuelling and replenishment of sonobuoys, which we will have to winch up as her deck is too small to land.

made us much more aware of what was to be a real threat.

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Nearing the new landing site I glanced across at the second crewman. We were starting to get a little twitched noticing there were more than the usual groups of Afghan men surrounding our intended site.

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However we’d already started our approach. Manning the Merlins guns our eyes scanned all around for the first sign of trouble. As we continued to

I was under the liferaft surfing up and down the 40ft waves, my winch hook had caught in the liferaft grab handle, so as I tried to swim out I became stuck under the raft underwater and seriously running out of breath.

I thought the survivor must’ve been nails as his ‘death grip’ on my arm seemed to be stopping me in my tracks!

I tried to swim back into the air pocket to get him to let go but couldn’t go that way either – the taut winch wire was keeping from going that way. Due to the design of the quick release buckle on my harness it was trapped between me and the liferaft.

Trapped, I thought: “Bollocks, this must be my time.”

I had a quick word with myself and decided it wasn’t and tried to figure a way out of this. Luckily, Tom had started to winch in and the tautness on the wire started to right the liferaft. Tom went with it and with the aid of a wave, the raft flipped over, quite by chance with the survivor still inside, but tossing me over the back of it and into the sea!

In the maelstrom I found I was tangled up in all the loose ropes and fought to cut myself free. I’d been in and out of the water now for about 30 minutes and felt pretty shattered with all the physical exertion, but I knew I had to once more swim back to the survivor, get him into the strop and winched up safely into the aircraft. Cutting away more entanglement I got him into the strop and we were finally winched away from the raft and pitched back into the sea and swell.♦

For their combined efforts the crew of Rescue 193 were awarded The Edward and Maisie Lewis Award by the Shipwrecked Mariners’s Benevolent Society and The Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award by the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators, while Sgt Russell was awarded the Billy Deacon SAR Memorial Trophy and the George Medal.



Lusky called the skipper over the radio: “Have you got a liferaft?” “We have but we don’t know if it works.” “Well I suggest now is a good time to find out!” came the deadpan reply from Lusky.

A minute later the liferaft tipped over the side and the crew jumped in and streamed off the rear end of the yacht. Rosko manoeuvred the aircraft to the liferaft and Tom lowered a hi-line down.

Each time Tom tried, the hi-line whipped close by the raft, but unfortunately it proved impossible for the survivors to grab it for fear of being thrown overboard if they let go of their handholds. “OK, I’ll go down and get them one at a time,” I volunteered; this would require me being launched into the darkness and committing myself to a dunking.

Rosko lowered our height and once settled, Tom winched me out and got me to a safe working height.

About five seconds after reaching this height a massive wave appeared from the darkness and into the illumination of our spotlight; I was completely engulfed and the transmit facility of my voice comms cut off. “So, it’s going to be like that, is it?” I thought to myself.

I now had to carry on with hand signals and hope they would understand my signals as I was engulfed by waves. We couldn’t dwell on this for long, though, as keeping me safely at height and lowering me to the liferaft wouldn’t work due to the violence of the liferaft.

The only viable option was to trawl me through the water and get me close to the raft as it surged up and down 40ft waves, so I committed myself and started to think about the rescue.

Tom talked Rosko on to the yacht time after time, but on each occasion unsuccessfully, as the liferaft was whisked away from us at the last second.

Luckily, as I prepared myself for another miss and yet another dunking, I

spotted the liferaft painter line floating on top of the water. As I ‘deep sixed’ again, I thrust my arm over my head and out of the water and managed to grab the line.

I now hung on to the raft for grim death as I was tugged one way and the other by the helicopter. Rosko feathered the aircraft position to keep me on top of the raft.

I was exhausted with the constant battle, but using the tautness of the wire as the raft slipped down a wave and kicking like a man possessed, I just managed to haul and climb into the liferaft. I quickly checked that neither survivor had any injuries and then secured the first survivor into the strop.

As I clung on to the survivor, I gave a nod to Tom and we were dragged back into the water and finally up toward the relative safety of the helicopter.

As I looked over the first survivor’s shoulder I was horrified to see the raft picked up by a wave and thrown upside down. I felt physically sick and absolutely gutted that we may now have lost the second survivor.

As we rose toward the helicopter I made sure that my survivor couldn’t see what had happened and start panicking, whilst constantly scanning the surface in the spotlight for signs of any equipment or a body.

Tom and I quickly strapped the first survivor into a seat and then I went straight back to the cargo door, and started surveying the scene while giving Tom a ‘thumbs up’, showing that I was good to go. I constantly scanned the water as I went back down, but there was no sign of the second survivor so I decided that he was either trapped under the upside down liferaft or on his way to deeper depths.

Despite being battered by waves, Tom managed to con the aircraft and steer Rosko close to the raft. I don’t think I had much time to think about the situation I was getting myself into – I just had to get on with my job. I took a gulp of air and dived under the raft. Swimming under, I surfaced in an air pocket and to my relief found the second survivor, racked with fear and who, in his panic, grabbed hold and gripped me for dear life.

Up in the Sea King, Tom had lost sight of me and called to Lusky and Rosko: “We’ve lost Russ!”

Unsighted now for over a minute, Tom deliberated between hoping I was ok and allowing me enough slack wire to let me work, or raising the winch wire in case I was in difficulty.

I was busy checking that the survivor was ok when I heard this and decided to quickly swim back out and let my crew know that all was ok before going back under and figuring out how to go about getting the survivor out.

Unbeknown to me, however, while



In 2007, PO(ACMN) Richie Harker left the grey Merlin MK1 world behind and entered the green world of the RAF’s Merlin Mk3s (which are being transferred to the Commando Helicopter Force later this year to replace its aged Sea Kings).

In late 2010 I found myself at a US Naval Base in the Mojave Desert. Naval Air Facility El Centro is located in the heart of southern California, a two-hour drive from San Diego and Palm Springs. This was to be an interesting flying experience in and around the mountains whilst conducting numerous dust landings in the desert, as well as using the Merlin firepower on the gunnery ranges – all pre-Afghanistan training.

It was also during this detachment that I got to see how dangerous desert flying could be. One of the Merlins crashed during a two-ship dust landing. Everyone escaped, with one crew member receiving a serious injury. It was a real wake-up call for

us all and brought home what could go wrong in such benign conditions.

The following spring my flight set off for Afghanistan. No-one really knew what was about to happen or how we’d cope; to be honest I don’t think any of us did until we returned to the UK.

It was a tough few months flying – up to 12 hours a day – but we managed, not without incident.

The first thing which shook us was when one of the Merlins was landing to pick up troops and equipment at a recognised landing site near a patrol base.

While on the ground during the drop-off, one of the crew thought he’d heard a thud – possibly a negligent discharge from one of the troop’s rifles.

It wasn’t until later in the sortie that they realised that a Rocket-Propelled Grenade had been fired at the aircraft by insurgents. It had penetrated the soft skin, deflecting slightly across the internal ballistic protection, before exiting the other side. This can only be called a bloody lucky escape!

It was pretty early on in the deployment and a wake-up call that

made us much more aware of what was to be a real threat.

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However we’d already started our approach. Manning the Merlins guns our eyes scanned all around for the first sign of trouble. As we continued to

the landing site, I saw a donkey in the corner, laden with what looked like bags. At this point it was no real concern, but as the final stages approached I called an ‘overshoot’ as it was extremely tense – it just didn’t feel right.

We began the overshoot and as the nose came down to get forward speed, the donkey in the corner of the field was detonated! Rounds began to criss-cross the landing site beneath us.

We were in a very difficult situation. We couldn’t open fire due to our troops being on the ground surrounding the site. However, we’d made our escape and flew out to the desert, climbing to a safe altitude before returning the counter IED team to Camp Bastion.

Only then did we get the chance to explain to them what had happened. There were some very relieved faces – including me.

It was a very memorable tour of duty. Later in the deployment we did actually lose a Merlin, which crashed in the desert making an approach to a landing site. Fortunately the crew walked away, surviving without a scratch.♦

